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# IDYLLS OF THE DANE

IRENE ELDER MORTON



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# IDYLLS OF THE DANE

BY  
IRENE ELDER MORTON



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## DEDICATION

To the Beloved Comrades of the Hearth,  
Who all have passed the last turn on the Upward Way,  
I who alone remain, dedicate  
These fragments of a wandering mind.

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"So in the discords of unhappy men,  
From out their barbarous tumults, there go  
Up to God the sighs of solitary souls  
In Him united."

GIOSUE CARDUCCI.

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## TO THE READER

A song of Eld that came like dream of night  
Across dim ages, with their silent seas,  
Where only the old pilot stars looked down  
From the far Dane-land, where a princess moved,  
Enshrined in the white robes of maidenhood,  
Unharm'd amid the stormy days of Eld;  
For the Great Love had touch'd her and she died,  
Stretching her white hands to the coming Light.

Shall we not love the Dane? Do we forget  
The Royal Dane, who in the morning days,  
When looking for the choicest flower of life,  
Chose the brave Rose of England for her flower,  
And did so cherish it in close and field,  
That the wide Empire gloried in its bloom?

Can we forget that when our king beloved,  
—Who had so helped the world to keep God's  
Peace—  
Passed to His home behind the mystic veil,  
The Royal Dane held last his eye and hand?



IDYLLS OF THE DANE





# IDYLLS OF THE DANE

## AN EARLY DREAM OF PEACE

There dwelt in days so ancient that the date  
Of them is covered by the mist of years,  
Circling in long gone centuries, three kings  
Upon three island kingdoms, where the waves  
Of the North Sea beat up against the coast  
Of Dane-land; dropping South the islands lay,  
The smallest kingdom ruled by Conamore,  
The largest by the youngest of the kings,  
Noted for strength and bravery, Valdershield;  
The other kingdom, ruled by an old king,  
Most fierce in combat, ever deep in war,  
Who had one only child, the fair Helene.  
She, even in childhood, hated war and strife,  
And to her listening maids would often tell  
Of some glad coming time when peace should take  
The place of war upon their island home.  
The old king held her as the one white thought  
He loved, laughed at her fancies, but denied  
Her naught, and often to his lords would say:  
"Sir knights, you must do all your fighting while  
I live, for when you have a queen, I fear  
Your swords will rust." But ever when they bat-  
tled  
On the sea or land, the bravest knights were left  
To guard Helene.

When the young princess grew  
To maidenhood, the wondrous light within  
Her starry eyes seemed to be looking at  
The world as through a veil of mist. She, with  
Her women, wandered often by the sea,

And watched its glimmering spaces rise and fall,  
Or listened when the thunder of its waves  
Was breaking loud against the beach. In times  
Of peace her galley sailed among the isles.  
The princess' galley bore a snow-white flag,  
And passed unchallenged wheresoe'er it pleased.  
Brave Valdershield gave orders to his knights;  
"Whenever on the sea you meet the white  
Flag of Helene, lower my red one to it."  
After much pausing by the open sea,  
After much listening in the starry nights,  
The princess one day sought the king, and said:  
"I have one great request to make, O king!  
And by the memory of my mother's face,  
And by the power that holds my heart to yours,  
Promise me you will grant it, now before  
I speak."

The king put both his hands against  
Her cheek and gave the pledge.

She said, "Command  
Your strongest galleys to be fitted out,  
Manned with the bravest of our men: let each  
Be captained by a trusty knight to bear  
Me southward over seas that show no land  
Against the distant water rim."

The king  
Cried with blanched face:  
"Why did you take  
My pledge for such a wild, capricious wish  
As this?"

The princess said, "Stories have come  
To me of a far land, where grows a seed,  
Yielding a flower and fruit whose perfume first  
Stirs thoughts of love and blessedness within  
The heart. The fruit when perfected works so  
Upon the brain, men know the best, and from

Choice follow it. There must be something better  
Meant for man's work in the world than brutal  
war.

There comes to me from out the starry depths  
And in the many voices of the wind,  
As in the voices of the moaning sea,  
And in the presence of all voiceless things,  
That Nature holds to heal and help mankind,  
A sense of surety that outside of all  
There lives a power, strong, merciful and good,  
And that men might, by giving up their wars,  
And evil works, which only do destroy,  
By tender care of Nature's gracious gifts,  
And helpfulness, each to the other, grow  
To something working with that Power, until  
The man's work met the God's outside, and so  
Unite, and make a circle girding all  
The isles, and all the unknown lands beyond,  
While earth grows golden with the fruits of peace."

And so it came the Princess with her maids,  
Encircled by a fleet, sailed down the flood.  
The king had sent a galley strongly manned,  
With orders to return with word to him  
When they had found the land for which they  
sailed.

The full-orbed moon had twice looked on the isles,  
When the king hailed his messengers again,  
Bringing good tidings of the loved Helene  
And voyage fair to all the ships and men.  
All were safe landed on the wished for shore.  
And named the time when they should steer for  
home.  
When the long-looked-for time at length came  
round,  
And the far sea line showed the princess' fleet,

Like specks upon the sky rim to their eyes,  
The old king ordered fires along the coast,  
And gave command for general holiday.  
But a wild storm came down upon the flood,  
And the vast spaces of the Northern Sea  
Broke up in fury. Strong, fierce winds gave open  
Combat to the towering waves, that thundered  
down

Their foaming columns on the shuddering shore.  
The old king cried in passionate despair:—  
“My kingdom to the man who saves my child!”  
But the fierce waves threw up far on the land  
The boats in fragments that essayed to pass.  
The wild storm spent its fury in one night,  
And when the morning dawned, the long, slow line  
Of lessening waves brought up some broken oars,  
And fragments of the desolated ships.

The king and all his knights stood dumb, and  
watched

One solemn, slowly moving, towering wave,  
That traveled far up on the coast and broke:  
But when the surge drew back, it left upon  
The shore the princess, holding in her dead,  
White hands a casket, sealed and bound about  
Her waist with treble cord. The fringing eye-lids  
veiled

Her wondrous eyes, and her sweet face spoke not  
Of storm or wreck, but in mute loveliness  
Lay like a stranded flower of peace.

The old  
King knelt beside her on the sand, and all  
His knights stood round him with uncovered heads,  
And such a wail of sorrow went along  
The shore, the shuddering waves sank slowly back  
To calm, chanting a dirge of sad regret.

Then the knights bore her to the Palace Hall.  
The weeping maidens dried the gold brown hair,  
And dressed for the last time the lovely form  
In queenly draperies, wrought with gems and gold:  
And all the people of the realm wept.

Then sent the old king forth two embassies,  
Calling the other kings to come to him;  
For his great sorrow wrought forgetfulness  
Of wars and strife. Then came King Conamore,  
And the strong Valdershield, followed by many  
Galleys filled with knights, and when they took  
their  
Places in the Palace Hall, and stood around  
The dead form of the beautiful Helene,  
The old king took the casket still close-sealed,  
And opened it in presence of them all.

They found the casket filled with a fine seed  
That seemed a golden sand, and in it lay  
A letter to the king. For a brief space  
He struggled to command his thoughts within,  
Then read aloud the last words of Helene:  
"As we are leaving this fair land I seem  
To feel, although our galley prows are turned  
Toward home, and the far sea line shows no hint  
Of storm, that I may never look upon  
Your face again, O father, kind and true,  
And so I write.

The purposes for which  
I crossed the seas are all fulfilled, and I  
Bear home a casket of the golden seed,  
Of love and peace. If our ships suffer wreck,  
The kindly seas may bear the casket sealed  
And cast it on your shores; then, for the sake  
Of her whom you have kept within the strong,



Love tower of your heart, while all without  
Was red with carnage, listen to my words.  
Invite King Conamore and Valdershield,  
By messengers who carry my white flag,  
To come to our domain, and then divide  
The golden seed among the kingdoms three.  
Ask each in memory of the dead Helene  
To scatter it upon its mother earth,  
And learn the story that its flower and fruit  
Will tell. Our men are bending to the oar;  
And from the curved beach comes borne to me  
The heavy murmur of receding waves  
That seem to bear forever far away  
All the rough tumult and wild jar of life.  
And if the curtain rises, and I go  
Beyond all shadow to the central Light,  
Tell all our people whom I have so loved  
To guard in memory of the lost Helene  
Each atom of the golden seed, until  
Our land shall bloom with the white flower of  
peace.

When to all sights without I close my eyes  
And listen, while the voice from lands unknown  
Speaks to responsive thoughts that burn within,  
I seem to feel a wonderful, sweet peace,  
Lifting me like a strong, incoming tide,  
To rest, unbroken, infinite.

If one

Whom I could name might stand beside my couch  
Without his sword, and in his strong hands take  
My own until I crossed the bridge of death,  
And the white silence fell upon my face,  
And I could hear him swear that he would not  
Unsheathe his sword again, it were most sweet  
To die."

Then sank King Valdershield upon

His knees and moaned ;

“I might have wed her, but  
For these cursed wars. None knew but she and I  
I offered her my love, my realm, and fealty  
To her father's cause; that I with all my knights  
Would join with him, and take his country from  
King Conamore, and make one mighty kingdom  
Of the three. I swore by my true sword that  
For her love I would do this, and lay aside  
My crown, and take the place of chiefest knight,  
While the old king should live; then after he  
Should pass from us, that I would place a crown  
Of the three kingdoms on her head, while I  
Would be her loyal prince and servitor;  
But she would not; although the rose-flush dyed  
Her soft white cheek, just as the sunset glory  
Tints our skies of pearl, while my hot words fell  
On ear and heart. She lifted up her face,  
Sweet as the memory of my mother's songs,  
And said :

‘Love that endures is sweet, O king;  
I do not doubt your faith, but no hand may  
Ever mine enfold red with the blood of men;  
Voices are calling me across the seas  
Toward a happy shore where grows the fruit  
Of peace. If I can gather on that distant  
Shore even a handful of the precious seed,  
And bring it back and scatter it about  
Our kingdoms three, they tell me that its rare  
Perfume softens men's hearts, and fills them with  
Kind thoughts for others than themselves; that  
when

The white flower ripens to a golden grain,  
It makes a food for man that shows him all  
The best and highest things of life, and makes  
Him hate a life of war and greed. For I

Feel sure that man by conquest of the brute  
Within might grow to something grander than  
The fabled gods, whose power often seems  
To be the weapons of capricious wrath.'

"So she went from us and came back like this.  
But pardon me, my kings and lords, if I,  
The youngest of the kings, should seem to lead.  
As I stand here and look on this rare face—  
The like of which we look not on again—  
And touch this woman's hand"—He took her hand  
And held it while he spoke—"There comes to me  
The over-mastering thought of all that I  
Have lost—the treasures locked forever in  
This woman's heart; there comes with power, not  
Till now made clear, the meaning of her words  
Before she sailed away. Now I swear that  
I will lay down my sheathed sword at her feet  
And bury it with her; that I will take  
My portion of the seed and scatter it  
Where it can grow, and henceforth cultivate  
The arts of peace. O kings, my brothers, over  
This dead form I offer each my hand, and hold  
My word as sacred as this gold brown hair,  
That I will never turn to you in strife  
Again."

Then said the king, her father, with  
King Conamore: "Thou hast spoken well"; and  
each  
Laid down his sword beside the sheathed one  
Of Valdershield, and they were buried with  
Helene.

When the sad rites were ended, and the last  
Low dirge of music had been borne away  
Over the waves of the regretful sea,  
The king, her father, called on all his knights



To stack their arms upon the princess' grave.  
King Conamore, and he who loved Helene,  
Gave the same order; and the clash of arms  
That echoed over land and sea rang out  
The requiem of War above her grave.  
They stood a burnished monument of steel,  
Their evil work forever done, untouched  
Forever more by human hands.

The old king gave to each the other kings,  
When after many days they left his realm,  
A portion of the precious golden seed,  
That grew a wondrous white flower, small as  
The daisy, with a stem of gold; and when  
The summer winds blew o'er the fields of white  
And gold, subtle, undreamed of fragrance filled  
The air, and seemed to enter through the senses  
To the heart, and blossom there in thoughts of love.  
Then when the bloom had faded into grain  
And all the people in each kingdom ate  
The food, there sprang from kings and knights  
such deeds  
Of kindliness and care for all the realm,  
That none could render back aught but the love  
And service of their lives.

Should any say, "This is an idle dream,  
Of which no history can prove a trace,"  
I answer, "Who can tell us half the history  
Of half the world?" We mine and study till  
Our minds grow burdened with the weight of  
thought;  
We scarcely can endure the ignorance  
Of the unlearned—and yet races of men  
Have lived their day and died, thrones have been  
set,

And kingdoms glistened underneath the stars,  
Of which we know not anything. We come  
Upon a mound that means a people. Here  
Or there, in digging for some grand first work,  
Our spades find traces of the same thing done  
before

—Perhaps far better than our plans map out.  
Ages before the white Christ came  
To save the world, the shadow of Him was  
Forecast upon some reverent, out-reaching souls  
Who, groping blindly in the outer dark,  
Fell with their burdens on God's altar stairs,  
Built, who shall say where? Within what shadows?  
Or toward what verge? This one thing we know,  
That all who strive by sacrifice of self  
To bring some good thing to humanity;  
That all who war with evil in the world,  
Or fight the lions in the human breast—  
Whether in lands long crumbled by the sea,  
Whether in ages buried in the dusk;  
Walk in the shadow of that great event  
That thrilled the universe, and so forecast  
Its wondrous light upon the world's wide dark,  
And will let fall its mellowing rays down all  
The yet untrodden aisles of coming time.

## THE PRINCESS AND THE DANE

The Princess Edith stood in her high tower  
And watched with a white face the battle rage.  
Silent all day had stood her white webbed loom,  
Untouched the strings of her wild Northern harp.  
The women wept and wailed around her feet,  
But she had stood since dawn had brought the cry:  
"King Athelvar is landing on our coast  
With all his followers, armed to the teeth."  
Without the castle and within its walls,  
The sharp, quick call, "To arms!" had been obeyed.  
Rattle of shields and clang of many swords  
Had mingled with the outcry of the maids;  
But all the words the Princess Edith spoke,  
As she ascended to her tower, had been,  
"Alas, my father, it has come at last."

A fierce old warrior had her father been,  
Taking by foul means when the fair had failed,  
King of a Viking horde who dwelt upon  
The stormy highlands of the Northern seas—  
A stormy fragment of the human race,  
Who had grown strong by hardship, and had  
breathed

The keen, invigorating Northern air,  
Till bone and muscle answered to the blood  
That sent its mighty pulses through the heart:  
Untaught, save in its wild desire to dare.  
And so they blindly reached out eager hands  
After what seemed to them the highest good.

The Princess' father had a year before  
Made war offensive on a distant tribe.  
The leader of the tribe, a gray old man,  
With one son only, and no other child,

Was taken by surprise, but bravely met  
The lawless Viking and his armèd host.  
His son, Prince Athelvar, with many men,  
Was absent on a voyage over seas.  
He was a lover of the sea, and longed  
To find out other places in the world.  
So he built galleys, strong and many oared,  
But with a central mast and ready sail,  
To bear them onward when the winds blew fair.  
His father was a fierce old Dane who knew  
No higher joy than conquest over foes;  
But when full manhood dawned upon the prince,  
He asked his father to make no more wars  
Until he should explore far shores unknown.  
"Beyond the sea there must be other lands,  
Perhaps with less of storm and war than this.  
I have heard rumors of an island large,  
And veined with peaceful rivers, lying South,  
Round which the waters of the world join unseen  
hands."

Prince Athelvar had voyaged for a year,  
Explored the coast of Britain, and in wake  
Of Cæsar's followers had gone on to Rome;  
And when at last he turned his galley's prow  
Across the widening seas to find his home,  
His mind was filled with larger meanings, caught  
From the new life in Britain and in Rome.  
The voyage seemed but short, so full were heart  
And brain of plans for work among his tribe.  
"What man has done," he said within himself,  
"Man yet may do," and so he bravely planned  
To lead his people to a higher life.  
No tidings of the war had reached his ears,  
Nor any rumor that the king was dead;  
And when they neared the old familiar coast,

His heart filled with deep longings to behold  
Again the grey-haired sire, and to recount  
To him the wonders of the wider world,—  
He strained his eyes to see among the crowd  
Who gathered on the shore to welcome him,  
His father's form, which held for him alone  
The blood of kindred on the stormy earth.  
But when the chieftains met him with a look  
Of sorrow mingled with their joy, and hailed  
Him "King," his face blanched, and he scarce could  
find

A voice, but soon he cried,

"Not king, nay, greet  
Me not as king. Where is the king, my father?  
Let us go to him; lead, and I follow.  
But speak not on the way. It is but meet  
The son should greet the father first of all.  
I miss so many faces, but no doubt  
They wait my coming with the king."

One said,

"They are with the king";

"It is well; pass on."

And so the crowd moved slowly toward the hall,  
An ominous silence brooding over all.

The hall was reached, the chief swung wide the  
door,

And said, "Enter the king."

A feast was spread;  
The burnished armour glistened on the wall;  
The floor was spread with many skins of beasts;  
Upon the broad stone hearth a bright fire blazed,  
And in its place, covered with leopard skin,  
The old man's seat stood vacant by the fire.

The prince sank down upon the vacant chair,  
While the chief told the story of the loss.



"All things are ready; we but wait the son  
To lead us to avenge the death of him  
Who fell facing the foe," added the chief,  
Who closed the story of the unsought strife.  
So Athelvar, who had dreamed of better things,  
Set out again to lead his tribe to war.

The Princess Edith, from her window tower,  
Had seen her father's colors three times fall;  
She waited long with wildly beating heart,  
But neither hand nor breeze lifted their folds;  
Before the battle closed the tidings came,  
That all for them was certain rout and loss.  
Oland, one of her father's chiefs whom she  
Had in her heart a woman's cause to dread,  
After the king fell, left the field and sought  
An audience with the Princess in the hall;  
With hurried step and throbbing heart she came;  
He would have seized her hand, but she drew back  
And asked,

"What of my father? Is the battle lost?"  
"The king is slain, but with his dying breath  
He charged me to come quick to you and urge  
Immediate flight with me by boat, for this  
Tall Dane, prince Athelvar, is everywhere,  
And fights like all the gods in one. Be sure  
That he will show no mercy, for this is  
A warfare of revenge; and I beseech  
You, Princess, for your own sake fly with me."  
A fine scorn gleamed athwart the beauty that  
She turned full on the traitor, as she said  
"I doubt my father gave such dying counsel  
For his child, and I, though but a girl,  
Will choose to die beside my people if  
My single hope of life depends on flight.  
If you would serve me, take this flag of truce,

Go to prince Athelvar, and say, 'The dead  
King's daughter asks an audience in the hall.'  
Go quick, before all remnant of my people  
Fall by the avenging sword."

Oland went  
Slowly out and gave the message to the prince.  
"My Viking foe, had he no sons?" asked Athelvar,  
When Oland gave the message that he bore.  
"Go tell the princess that within an hour  
I will attend her in the hall."

Then prompt  
He gave the signal that declared the strife  
Was closed, and ordered that the dead king should  
Be given burial first.

"A miserable  
Thing is war,—here I have killed the father  
Of a girl who has no brother," he spake  
To himself, as he came from the river,  
Where he plunged and swam many times 'round  
his  
Galleys to erase all stains of battle  
E'er he clad himself in royal garments  
Fitting for a king.

The Viking chief had stolen in his youth  
The fair-haired mother of his child from out  
A Danish galley which he chanced to meet  
While cruising carelessly about the coasts.  
Her nurse was with her, so he brought her too,  
Hoping to make the fair Dane more content.  
But the nurse, good Ilda, though she had served  
Most faithfully her mistress all her life,  
Had never loved the Viking or his ways.  
When death's chill touched the mother, she had  
placed  
The small hands of her baby on good Ilda's

Cheek, and took her promise that she never  
Would desert her child, but cherish her, and watch  
For chance, provided by the gods, to take  
Her daughter back to be a Dane.

The Viking let her have her way about  
The child. They lived within the rooms built at  
The top of the high tower, only approached  
By a long winding stair above the noise  
And din of the wild horde.

There stood the loom  
Where Ilda taught the princess how to weave  
The wonderful white texture which she said  
Would some day make a royal garment for  
A coming prince.

Ilda had taught her all  
Her Danish songs, and told her all the sweet  
Old stories of the land she loved. How fair  
Helene had given up her life to bring  
Unto the islands that she loved the flower  
Of peace; how Valdershield the brave had never  
Wed a wife, but cherished thoughts of her,  
Until the gods had called him home.

The fire blazed high within the Viking's hall,  
When Edith entered it to meet the king,  
Who, with an easy grace of mien and voice,  
Advanced and said,

"Regard me not, I pray,  
As one who would molest your liberty  
Or life; my latest triumph fills me with  
Deep shame. If you sought vengeance I should feel  
It just."

The princess stood before him with  
The beauty of the woman reaching through  
The sweet, pearl, child-look on her earnest face.



Her words came clear and low as she replied:  
"I have no brother; I cannot avenge  
My father's death, nor would I if I could.  
Why kill so many more? The blood of half  
The tribes would not bring back the life of one.  
There is to me some thing most dreadful in  
A still, dead face, from which all thought of hope  
Or love, or power, has forever fled.  
My nurse, who is a Dane, has told me tales  
About the tribes who dwell far down the flood,  
Which our wild mountain torrents rush to greet;  
I think the gods have shown them more than us,  
Who dwell perhaps too far from sun-rise for  
The gods to care. I know what conquest means.  
Only myself now stands between my people  
And this fighting world; my father mourned much  
That I was a girl."

The king bowed low and said:  
"Princess, I think the gods did well to make  
You what you are.

It will be joy to me  
In any way to serve you and repair  
The evils I have done. I did not know  
Your father had no sons, or, by the royal  
Gods, I would have waited long e'er I had  
Manned a galley, or unsheathed a sword."  
In a low voice Edith replied,

"My father did  
You very grievous wrong; when he came back  
From that aggressive war and told how they  
Had slain an old man while his son was far  
Away, my heart rose in a tempest of  
Regret, and many nights I lay awake,  
Thinking of his return. I pictured first  
His sorrow, and I knew the laws of warfare  
Would demand revenge."

“Could I have dreamed,  
O princess,” said the king, in tones subdued,  
“That any thought of me, or of my sorrow  
Had gone out from such a temple of fair woman-  
hood,

I should have rather sunken all my fleet  
Than come to make disastrous war. If there  
Are any of your father’s chiefs whom you  
Can trust to lead and reconstruct, it will  
Be well; if not, I will myself see that  
Your wishes are fulfilled, and will remain  
Until you have no further need of me.”

“There is not one,” Edith replied, “whom I  
Could name as leader of the tribe. Oland,  
Who took my message to the king, would fain  
Become the chief, but him I have great cause  
To dread. He has no hold upon the tribe,  
Nor any claim, save empty love of rule.”

So Athelvar took command within the hall,  
Winning the remnant of the tribe by gracious ways,  
While Edith and her women dwelt within  
The tower, until all signs of battle  
Had quite disappeared, the wounded cared for,  
And the wives and children of the fallen  
Warriors found by order of the princess  
Shelter in the hall.

Oland had made one  
Wild attempt to overthrow the princess’  
Rule and hold the tribe, but had been taken  
Prisoner by the king. The people clamored  
For his life, but Edith said,

“Shed no more blood  
But banish him forever over seas.”  
He took his sentence from the king,  
Glad of his life, but muttering vengeance

Deep on her who spared his life, but shrank in  
Loathing from his love.

The people soon grew wond'rously content  
Under the gracious rule of Athelvar.  
After a time the princess and her maids,  
With Ilda, came at evening to the hall,  
Where the huge fire sent forth its ruddy gleams  
Upon the happy faces gathered there,  
Where were spread 'round soft skins of many beasts  
Upon great couches, and upon the floor.  
Sometimes a feast was spread before the king  
And Edith, by the happy maids, who did  
Not mourn, because the rule of the hard old  
Fighting king was o'er.

One day the king had  
Heard the princess' harp, and begged to have it  
Brought within the hall, where often Edith touched  
Its vibrant chords, while her sweet voice rose clear  
And echoed long within the heart of Athelvar  
The king.

But often Edith asked that he  
Would tell tales of his wanderings over distant  
seas,

And of the sights in Britain and in Rome.  
"I have so often longed," she said, "to see  
The edges of the world, where the great seas  
Swirl 'round and underneath the stars. I have  
Wondered much if their light can be quenched,  
or if

They float and sparkle on the outer seas  
To light the way for galleys of the gods.  
Did you learn aught in any other lands  
From any of the people of the gods?  
And why it is they pour upon the world  
So much of hate and war? If they would but

Give us love instead! How good it were to  
Rest on a strong love outside of all!"

Then Athelvar came near to her and said,  
"In that great Island, Britain, there are men  
Who are priests only; never do aught else  
But minister the rites of service to  
Their God. I listened and learned this, they have  
But one, not many gods like us, and worship  
As supreme the very God of gods, who  
Alone hath power to measure good and evil  
To the world. I thought much of that. I too  
Have longed to know more of the meaning of  
All life; why men should live fighting each other  
On this stormy earth, why the great waters  
Rise and fall; and what the voice of their deep  
Undertone, resounding like the smothered  
Whispers from the shores where dwell the happy  
gods,

And why the stars shine as they do, some large,  
Some less; they do not shine by chance; you note  
That certain brilliant ones come at set times,  
And keep their places in the great blue arch;  
Most likely they are leaders of the lesser stars,  
And all move peacefully, shedding their light  
Alike upon the living and the dead.  
They are alive, those stars, I feel quite sure,  
And move by order of some power unknown.  
When our seven galleys found their way to Rome,  
It was not for war or pillage, but I thought  
Surely the secrets of all knowledge will  
Be open here. I wore the Roman dress,  
And mingled freely with the moving crowd.  
No tongue can tell the wonders of that world;  
I felt like one drifted from some bleak shore,  
To which the light of only lesser stars

Had come. And yet I did not find what most  
I longed to know; that was, to understand  
The meaning of myself and other men,  
Why life should break like waves upon the shore,  
Eddy and swirl and disappear beneath  
Forgotten sands. Often at night when our  
Ships floated on the spreading seas,  
I longed to know more of the power that spoke in  
star

And wave, but I found none in Rome who cared  
For this.

I saw one die at Rome. Around him  
There were scores of men and women on  
Raised seats, each one above the other. He  
Stood on a place where all could see. Then were  
Let loose upon him fierce wild beasts. The  
Roman

Is more brutal than the Dane. We kill in  
War; but they make sport of death. It seems  
enough

When the shield rattles and the armour rings,  
To take away what no man can restore;  
But to make holiday, and watch while one  
Man falls before brute force is what the Dane  
Or Norseman cannot do.

This man whom I  
Saw die had been a follower of One  
Called Christ. I never can forget the face  
Of him: the pallor of it was extreme;  
But such a look I never saw on dying  
Face before. No fear, but radiant with a light  
Unspeakable. He stretched forth both his hands  
And prayed to One invisible, and cried,  
'My Father, I am ready; take me to  
Thyself, and shew this people that Thou art  
The very God.'



He made no struggle with  
The beasts, but let them tear, until in one  
Long, joyful cry, his voice died out. That was  
The wonderfulest thing I saw at Rome.  
I asked about this Christ. He had been put  
To cruel death, hated alike by Roman  
And by Jew; yet even Pilate said when he  
Condemned Him, that there was 'no fault in Him.'  
His life had been spent only in good deeds.  
He taught a clean, pure life of helpfulness  
By man to man, and claimed to be the Son  
Of the One God, come to redeem the people  
Of the earth. I had the name 'Christ' made on  
White wax at Rome, and brought it for my father.  
I would I could learn more of Him. He said  
That death was not the end, that those who loved  
And followed Him should have a life with Him  
Unending in a better world than this.  
How good were that, another, better life,  
That we may seek and hope for in this world;  
The outside of our life is not the best.  
I would have given all the Cæsar's rule  
To have found my father waiting by his fire.  
The Romans have a brave outside, but wrong,  
Murder, and pillage fester in their courts.  
They serve themselves, those Romans. Some day  
Rome  
Will fall.

If such a thing could be that this  
Christ taught, that the One God did love the world  
Enough to come and live His life among  
The poor, shewing at once the brotherhood  
Of the Divine and human, and at death  
Take those who listened to His teachings to  
An everlasting life of highest good,  
Why, we could go on joyfully in hope;

For Thor and Odin live so far away;  
This is the first God who hath touched the world."

The princess with a rapt and earnest face  
Sat silent while he spoke, and then replied,  
"That were indeed a God, supreme in love,  
And for that Christ a man might dare to die."  
Then Athelvar claimed a song upon the harp;  
Then sang the maiden to responsive chords:

### SONG OF THE PRINCESS

"The joy in the heart of the rose,  
The song in the heart of the rain,  
The glory of gladness that flows  
O'er the billows of tall, ripened grain;

"The strength in the heart of the hills,  
The imprisoned lament of the sea,  
The low, happy laugh of the rills,  
All answer to something in me.

"The eyes of the gods in the stars,  
The thoughts of my heart understand;  
Our wild streams that sweep to the sea  
Bear to it the heart of the land.

"If a God who is kinder than Thor  
And stronger than Odin doth reign,  
Then love must encircle the world,  
And banish all memories of pain."

When Ilda and the princess were alone  
That night within the chamber of the tower,  
The face of Edith was aglow with thought;  
Her dark eyes gleamed like Venus when she shines  
At sunset through the softened vespèr air.

She said: "Ilda, you have not told me half  
The truth about the Danes; this king is grander  
Than my dreams of any of the gods." But  
While she spoke the nurse cried, "Hark, surely  
I closed the door below the tower stair?"  
She dropped the comb from out her up-raised hand,  
Leaving the gold floss of her lady's hair  
To fall around her like a bridal veil.  
Wrapped in a dream of sweet delight, the princess  
Did not note the sudden pallor on her  
Nurse's face, only half noted that she  
Left the room, closing the door that fastened  
With a spring upon the inner side.

The king had lingered by the dying fire,  
His heart too full of gracious thoughts for speech.  
The revelation of that sweet, rare face,  
And wonderful white hand that seemed  
To hold all womanhood within its clasp,  
Thrilled through him as no thoughts had thrilled  
before.

"I seem to understand at last," he said,  
"The true uplifting of all life. Oh, my  
Heart's rose, how did you bloom so graciously  
In this rough clime?"

But suddenly the door  
Flew open, and the nurse cried out,  
"Come quick,

O King, Oland is on the tower stair."  
He waited not for any weapon, but  
Rushed on to find the ruffian had reached  
Almost the top. The door was open—Edith  
Stood without; all trace of color had gone  
From her face. At sound of hurrying feet  
Oland turned round upon the stair to meet  
The king, and cried:



“Now if you love your life,  
You pirate prince, come not another step.  
I swear if you come nearer that my sword  
Shall drain your blood, and then within my lady’s  
Room she will be glad to be my wife to-night.”  
The princess stretched her hand toward the king,  
And said:

“Come not within the compass of  
A coward’s stab, brave prince. Fear not for me.  
My tower window opens to the floor.  
Rather than this brute should lay one hand on me  
I cast myself down to the depths below.  
Death were a small dread in the place of him.”  
The king said, with a set, stern face,

“Go in  
And shut your door, but open not your window  
Till I call.”

Edith obeyed, and as she  
Closed the door Oland called to the king,  
“Now ask your last gift of the gods before  
My sword shall pierce your heart, but e’er you die  
Know this, the girl within should long ago  
Have been my wife.”

With his eyes blazing like  
The light of Mars, King Athelvar leaped  
The stairs between and cried,

“Die, dog of a liar  
That you are!” and hurled him down the long stone  
Tower stair.

Ilda had given quick alarm  
Without. A crowd of soldiers hurried to  
The stair just as the Viking’s body tumbled  
At their feet. The king called to his men, “Take  
Him at once, and give him a dog’s burial,  
Tramp firm the earth upon him, and then come  
To me.”

Ilda sped quickly to unclosethe door, which shewed them Edith with one hand  
Upon the unloosed fastenings of the window  
Door, her face as pallid as a marble urn;  
But when she saw King Athelvar stand without,  
She stretched out both her hands to him, and with  
A great cry sank upon the floor. When her  
Eyes opened and she saw the king's face bent  
Above her, her first words were: "Truly your  
God is good": and then, "Take me forever  
From this room!"

He bore her in his arms down  
The long stair, and laid her on a couch by  
The hall fire. Her frightened maidens gathered  
round

And wept, and shuddered when a sound was heard  
Outside. King Athelvar did not sleep that night,  
But caused a watch of soldiers to be kept,  
Until the morning light brought peace to all.

The Princess Edith never looked again  
Upon the tower stair where Oland died.  
The entrance to it was closed up with stone,  
And the door covered till it seemed a wall.  
A gentler life now filled the rooms below,  
And one strong presence wakened up for her  
Undreamed of harmonies, mystical and sweet.

Ilda had cut the white web from the loom,  
And set the maids to broidering with gold,  
Over rare patterns that the princess drew;  
And so they made a garment fitting for  
A king to wear upon his wedding day.  
The day was fair when Athelvar the Dane  
Wed Edith, daughter of his fallen foe.  
The tribes so long at war were under him

United first in one harmonious band.  
The princess to her people said, "Let all  
Who love me follow him with loyalty;  
So shall he lead us on to higher good;  
And when the winter shall have come and gone,  
And happy spring shall have unloosed again  
The kindly forces of the earth, we will  
All bid adieu to this wild land of storms,  
And seek a home where the soft south wind blows  
Among the tall trees crowning hills above  
The peaceful waters of a wondrous Bay  
Upon the coast of Britain, which the Danes  
Have long ago explored, and where the king  
Shall lead us when the days grow long again;  
For, O my people, who can tell if we  
Are each one faithful to the very best  
That lies within us, and that we can learn  
About this One true God who loves the world,  
But that, in some blessed future time,  
Norman and Dane may mingle with the Briton,  
And become a mighty nation serving the One God."

## TO A. M. F.

### A GIRL GRADUATE

O Girlhood with its crown of faith, we give  
Thee our best thoughts to-day, this grand June day,  
This new day, never used before; but when  
In coming years its memory unfolds  
May it be fragrant with the thoughts that now  
Bear summer incense for thy June of life.  
To-day thy feet have touched a turning step  
Upon the golden stair.

To-day you leave  
The shades where Virgil sang his stories of  
The tossing seas, and where the tall  
Closed doors of the wide past have opened to  
Thy call, and where thou hast heard across dead  
ages  
Unforgotten songs.

For thee may life be sweet;  
We know it will be true, and may the head  
Of the coiled serpent that so loves to spoil,  
Be newly wounded should he near thy path.

## TWO LITTLE SUNBONNETS

Two little sunbonnets, side by side,  
Hang on the wall at eventide;  
While two little faces, rosy and fair,  
Shaded by blonde and bonnie brown hair  
Have slipped from beneath them while angels keep  
Watch over slumbers restful and sweet.  
Oh! baby faces, so fresh and fair,  
With the pearl on the skin and the gold in the hair,  
And eyes as clear as angels' are  
As they pierce the blue for a missing star,  
And baby hearts with love untold,  
And soft white arms that our hearts enfold,  
How fair is life while the years are new,  
When home is the world and the world is true.

# THE OLD PARLIAMENT TO THE COM- ING WOMEN

## I

In ancient times we tied our queues  
And took our seats in parliament,  
And fought as brave for honor bright  
As knights of old in tournament.

## II

Our country's wrongs, the people's weal,  
Were then the reasons why we met  
And drew our diamond-hilted steel.  
But times have changed, we do forget.

## III

And shrink and shrivel like false men  
In glarish light of salaries,  
But ladies, ladies, come not down;  
Oh, keep you to the galleries!

## IV

Don't soil your trailing robes with dust;  
Let us fight on for salaries;  
We pray you charming ladies bright,  
Oh! keep you to the galleries.

## V

Sometimes in heat of party strife  
We look up to the galleries,  
And in the light of truth and love  
Almost forget our salaries.

VI

And strike out for a helpless truth  
That stands unclothed and shelterless,  
And careless of opposing lines  
We stretch our hands to help and bless.

VII

And when the battle waged and won  
A white hand from the galleries  
Had touched our own and made us know  
A dearer thing than salaries.

VIII

Oh, ladies, ladies, keep your heights  
Above all hope of salaries  
And leave us something dear and sweet  
Above us in life's galleries.



## SHE IS MINE

Let the wild wind beat the rain  
Up against my window pane.  
She is mine!

Night and storm have lost their power  
To disturb this charmed hour.  
She is mine.

Life has blossomed into joy,  
Holding nothing for alloy.  
She is mine!

And I charge you Demon Death  
Touch her not with your cold breath.  
She is mine!

Turn the lamp; the firelight falls  
Softly on the pictured walls.  
She is mine!

## A PICTURE

Her form held the grace of a linden tree;  
Her face was as fair as a woman's may be.

The frosted lace from her bared white arm  
Fell back to the shoulder. Oh! the charm

Of the warm-hued flesh tints; the woman's hands  
Grasped each the other—while unseen bands

Seemed to mock at the pressure brought to bear  
On the forehead crowned with its plaits of hair.

The bride of a month! What does she there,  
Entering the lists with Black Despair?

"If one could but try and then go back,"  
Are the words she said; then keeps her track

Up and down the long bright room,  
While the sunlight faints in the face of gloom.

So young! Yet the long black hill of life  
Held more of dread than a hungry knife.

Will she bind her strong soul to endure,  
And make no sign? Of this be sure

That the hungry who call and the hurt who cry  
"Behold my pain!" to the passer-by,

Have never sounded the depths that are known  
To the voiceless woman who stands alone.



# ON THE HILLS

## DEDICATION

To the beloved Comrades of the Hearth  
Who all have passed the last turn  
    In the Upward Way,  
I, who alone remain, dedicate  
These fragments of a wandering mind.

## PREFACE

A song of youth from one who, loving songs,  
Listened to music till at length she tried  
An octave for herself.

I. E. M.



## BOOK FIRST

### VALORIA

In a neat village where white-fingered spires  
Begged Heaven's blessing on their quiet fanes,  
Valoria's young hand touched the first note  
In the great song of life. It was where the Wye,  
Trailing its silver thread, winds through the heart  
Of Wales, like a shy maiden going where  
It would and charming men to follow its  
Sweet ways, that they might gaze upon its face  
As its bright eyes were dreaming in the shade,  
Or note its ruffled breast agleam with gold  
Dropped by the unsought largess of the sun;  
Or listen when the time of shadows fell  
To the low chaunt of rhymes, thrown from its  
deep

Heart to the ears of men, till drawing near  
It hears great Severn's voice, the voice that first  
Called to it in the distant happy hills,  
Called in weird harmony of winds that caught  
The great unwritten music of the sea;  
And as they met with voiceless marriage vow,  
It buries all its treasures in his heart.  
A little way withdrawn from the white dot  
Of cottages, a sudden hill reared high  
Its wooded form above a quaint old house,  
Whose gables rose amid a wilderness  
Of clinging vine, and cast their quivering  
Image in the Wye; and here amid the light  
On flower and wave, Valoria's young eyes  
Could only catch reflection of the sun  
And flowers.

Her father was a scholar who  
Had spent his early life in distant lands,

Who with a lover's earnest eye had scanned  
All loveliness, and with a lover's heart  
Had worshipped it, as part of the eternal  
Essence that distils on all created things.  
There had come floating back to his old home  
Vague rumors, in the first years of his stay  
Abroad, telling the old, old story that  
Is ever new, how the sweet grapes of youth  
Cast in the press of life yielded such wine—  
Such rare red wine, such sparkling wine—  
Held in God's sunlight gave back diamond stars  
That threw their light within two hearts and round  
One path of youth and love. The rumor died  
And was forgotten. In the after years  
The man came back alone; but all could see  
The glow had faded from the morning hills  
For him, and that the heart's impulses burned  
As low as morning beacon fires on which  
No hand has laid a faggot since last night.  
Disliking crowds, but genial with the few  
Married in time a quiet English wife,  
And settled down to quiet English ways.  
He had seen enough of cities and would live  
In this old house in Wales, which told weird tales  
Of battles fierce where throbbing hearts, long since  
Grown quiet at the Christ's first look, had burned  
Out life to light the way of truth, where weak  
Hands struggled with a giant wrong.

If the wave

Of love's first passion had rolled in upon  
The harbour of his heart, fragrant, agleam  
With rosy light, and bearing on its breast  
Fair flower and fruitage of far sunny lands;  
Had broken on the beach and borne away  
Not only all it brought but all the long  
Locked treasures of a strong man's heart; he made



No sign by which the world might know. There are  
Some essences whose subtle rare perfume  
Forever lingers round all they have touched;  
And there lay within a corner of an old,  
Old desk a little box of ivory  
And pearl that held a girl's glove and a broken ring,  
A bit of Venice carved upon its lid;  
Its spring had been untouched since distant years.

Companioned by her father, led by him  
In Science and in Art, Valoria  
Smoothly sailed from childhood's sheltered bay out  
on

The rose-flushed sea of dawning womanhood,  
(Not dreaming of the wrecks that, maybe, lay  
Beneath its waves) her gleaming white sails set  
To catch the springing breeze, the dainty helm  
Held by the strong hand of her father's love.  
What sunny shores to her young eyes were stretched  
Beyond the bright intenseness of the morning haze!  
What fragrances of foreign flowers, what sweet  
Low echoings of far-off song floated  
Up to her from the underworld! Beauty  
Had touched her with its subtle wand,  
Leaving an air of grace thrown carelessly about  
Her ways, as though she moved to music quite  
Unheard by other ears. Her mind was trained  
By study of all useful things; she was  
Enriched with all accomplishments; thought out  
Her own thoughts for herself; and breathing always  
An atmosphere of rare intelligence  
Within her father's house (he loved to draw  
Around him men who followed Art and Science  
For the love of it), her woman's thought had  
Learned to climb and twine round mighty truths.

But  
She had never loved; she had read of love,

And her heart told her what it was, yet one  
Knew by the clear unshadowed light within  
Her eyes, that never wandered or grew dim  
With far-off thought, the rosy god had troubled  
Not her maiden dreams.

“Valoria,” said  
Her father (he had given her that name,  
Though all the relatives pronounced it quite  
A needless alien in the family list)  
One night as they were resting after a day  
Spent on Welsh hills—“Valoria, you are  
So fond of heights that if I thought you would not  
Attempt the Matterhorn without a guide,  
Or try a ride upon an avalanche,  
I would take you to the Alps.”

With a quick burst  
Of pleasure she sprang up, and kneeling at  
His side declared that if he would but go  
She would deny herself the Matterhorn  
And ride on nothing wilder than a mule,  
But added quickly when she saw his eyes  
Were dim and that he did not smile as he  
Was wont at her gay badinage, “We are  
Happy here, and if it makes you sad to go  
We will stay at home, for nothing would bring joy  
To me that trailed along an ugly pain  
For you.”

“Nay, little one,” he said, taking  
Her in his arms, “the life has died from out  
The pain of life for me. It crept along  
Through all the years that should have been my  
best,

And fed upon the dainties and the bloom  
Till they were done, and then I think it starved,  
For after long, slow years it ceased to move.  
My thoughts flew backward to the time I first

Left England's shores, carrying with me strength  
And youth, and more, my daughter, more, carried  
Away what I could not bring back. There, rest  
Your head upon my breast, but do not talk,"  
He added, as he drew her close within  
His arms.

The evening draped its shadows all  
About the room, while the tired wind without  
Could only stir the ivy vines across  
The open door, and in the drooping elm  
A lonely night bird sang a lonely song.  
"What is it, father?" asked Valoria,  
Starting from half sleep.

"I did not speak, my  
Daughter."

"Yes, you said 'Valoria' twice."  
"Did I? I must have dreamed.

But it is late,  
And time you were in bed; good night, my darling,  
Go and dream you are in Switzerland."

There was a wide high balcony that overlooked  
The Wye, thick overhung with vine and elm,  
Where this rare girl, whose heart was all attune  
To Nature's varied moods, was wont to take  
Her last look in the summer nights upon  
A world of full-orbed silences. To-night  
She sought it with a heart aglow with joy,  
Joy, that she might behold that great grand vision  
Set in mount and cloud, where God's voice never  
dies

Away among the hills.

Should she indeed  
See Switzerland, the land where centered all  
Things strong and beautiful, the land whose voice  
Sounded the note of freedom with such power

The tyrant heard God's warrant in the call  
 And dropped his hold on that that was not his,  
 The land where Nature sang her grandest bass  
 In the strong tremor of the avalanche  
 And mountain floods, that pour their booming  
                   thunders  
 Through the echoing days? Should she kneel at  
 The foot of God's great hills and worship Him  
 Through His great works? And might she climb  
                   and bathe  
 Her unclad forehead in the mist of cloud  
 That hung around the Wengern Alp, and see  
 The falling glaciers of Jungfrau, the cone  
 Of Silberhorn, and gaze with dazzled eyes  
 Up where the Matterhorn held yet the longed-  
 For secrets of the ice world hid away,\*  
 Amid the deep white silence of its awful heights?

## GENEVA

It is not that Mount Blanc looks down from its  
 Eternal calm of ice and snow upon  
 The life of flower and plash of wave and warmth  
 Of human life below; nor yet because  
 The wand of beauty draws its magic ring  
 In shadow of the Jura over earth  
 And wave and air. It is not for this alone  
 Men gather to try heart of liberty.  
 Geneva! rich in beauty, richer far  
 In memories of noble deeds that shall  
 Not shrink and perish at the touch of death,  
 Where heroes' names are household words, and  
                   where  
 Memories of martyrs are passed down from sire

\* At the time this poem was written the Matterhorn had  
 never been ascended.

To son, like family jewels guarded with  
 Jealous care. Here Chillon frowns upon the waves  
 Below, and while the heart aches at the thought  
 Of its sad prisoner in his dungeon rounds,  
 It yet rejoices that at last the prey  
 Was taken from the iron hand of wrong.  
 Here Voltaire hissed his venom'd genius o'er  
 A world he left more beggared in its faith  
 In God and love than when he found it. From  
 Its heart have poured great arteries whose strong  
 Pulsations burst all tyranny and made  
 Its people free; and to its heart have drawn  
 The poet, the philosopher, worker,  
 And dreamer of all lands and climes.  
 Valoria was shown each spot that claimed  
 Historic interest or poetic fame  
 From Chillon's dungeon towers to Rousseau's isle.  
 Her father formed a friendship with  
 An Englishman, who every year shook from  
 His soul the blinding dust of crowds, and gave  
 It holiday among the hills, that it  
 Might drink the glowing cup God's hand holds out  
 To us from places near his throne. Wendal  
 Knew all the secrets of the hills, knew where  
 They hid their silver chimes, and kept within  
 The strongholds of their giant hearts a place  
 For man; and with his strong arm plying his  
 Swift oar they floated many a night upon  
 The moonlit waters of the gleaming lake.  
 Wendal and Mr. Mooer talked much of Art  
 And politics, history and poetry,  
 With subtile essences of things that come  
 And go, touching our spirits with bewildering  
     thoughts  
 Of things that we should know but have forgot;  
 And often, shipping oars, would seem to reach



The farthest stretch of human thought, and sit  
Silent and reverent before the veil  
Of the unknown, that mystic veil which floats  
In some rare hours so near we almost feel  
Its noiseless folds chilling our cheek, and then  
Receding in the mist so high and far  
We may not fathom where its limit lies.  
Valoria listened, with her face aglow  
With thought; if Wendal noticed it he made  
No sign. It was plain he never would bear arms  
Or win a badge as carpet knight. He left  
Before them, promising to meet among  
The Alps where he must hasten on to join  
A party for a great ascent.

Above

The vale of Lauterbrunn they met again,  
And during a month's rambles on the hills  
Their feet seemed naturally to tread within  
One path.

It was the day but one they were  
To leave; Wendal came early to their rooms,  
And said the day was glorious, and that  
The slightest sound made music in the air;  
Even though it started in a discord, touched  
By the echoes hidden in the hills, it  
Ended in a chime; and begged leave to act  
As Miss Mooer's guide that day among the hills.  
He was familiar with the paths for miles  
Around, and pledged his reputation as  
A guide to bring her back in safety. Her  
Father gave consent but added,

"I must tell  
You if there is any chance for doubtful climbing  
She will do it. She was born an outlaw.  
All my early scorn for bars, and longing  
For the unattainable I find in her,

Therefore be sure you keep always on guard.  
She led me a bewildering chase the day  
Before you came. I had to send a careful  
Footed guide up a steep height to bring her down."  
"And you, Miss Mooer," he added, kissing her  
Good-bye, "be sure for once you mind your master."  
"Yes," laughed Valoria with a pretty gesture  
Of mock reverence, "I will, most truly,  
When I find him."

"It seems, Miss Mooer," said Wendal  
As they left the inn, "that you are to be  
Closely watched."

"It is all because I do  
Not think that helplessness need always be  
A positive necessity in women,  
And here on these inspiring heights where one  
Sniffs freedom in the winds, it seems absurd  
Always to be tucked under some one's arm,  
Just like a neat brown paper parcel labeled  
'Touch with care'; the simple truth in all things  
seems

The best. But round and underlying all  
Do you not think," she added with a glow  
Of earnestness upon her fair young face,  
"That here in God's high places where He speaks  
So plainly to us through His works, that we  
Throw down instinctively the shams that have  
Been built around our souls, and speak and act  
Just true?"

"Yes," answered Wendal, gazing down  
On her with attentive face, "here I first  
Learned to know how grand a thing is simple truth,  
And of what simple elements our best  
Things are composed. It takes half a life to show  
Us this in spite of Nature's gentle lessons,  
And even then it is only learned by those



Whose souls can be attuned to God and Nature.  
In the first flush of wealth, men, in building homes,  
Order on varnish, heavy bands of gold,  
Deep piles of vivid color, have their table spread  
With such profuseness that the dishes crowd.  
But after years of culture man discerns  
Profuseness is bad taste, prefers the real wood  
That shows fine grain, orders his colors with  
Less lavish hand, and his table ceases to groan  
Beneath its load. So, reaching down through all  
The half-dead, senseless, outside rims of life,  
We find the soul of things is sweet and true;  
Just the sweet 'You and I' of life make up  
The jewels in the rosary of years  
Whose unforgotten glimmer throws the last  
Sweet earth light in the heart of age. A lamp  
Trimmed by a woman's hand, the opal homelight  
Curtained from the world, the mother with her  
Baby's cheek against her own, its smile within  
Her heart, all that makes perfect joy to man,  
Is sweet and true. Heart of the rose and heart  
Of life, just simple, sweet and true."

"Hark!" said  
Valoria, pointing with her hand, "that bird  
Above seems echoing your refrain; its clear  
Notes cleave the air, like, 'sweet and true,' and I  
Believe that from an Alpine song-bird to  
A human soul feeling around for God  
To hold it and to make it pure, your words  
Are true. The bird sings what God gave it while  
The tired soul just touches Him  
And rests."

"Thank God," said Wendal, "that He has  
Given us such conditions on which to build  
Our lives, and that the empty glitter of  
External show declares itself the tinsel

Sham it is within the presence of the pure  
And true. How often we see souls so stamped  
With the clear mark of God that they simply must  
Be what they are! How little the mere critic  
Thinks of this, or knows that a great soul that comes  
To us with the pressure of God's fingers still  
Upon it, leaving it, maybe, less smooth  
Than other souls, can only give us truth;  
Maybe in fragments, yet often in unbroken  
Crystals."

"Yes, that is why so many souls  
Great in simplicity and truth with power  
To shew their great thoughts to the world mine out  
From the wide dark the same bright thoughts, al-  
though

The miners may be centuries apart  
And neither knew the other mined. Then one  
Must smile to see the yard stick man who does  
The critic in some tart review, point out  
With his small measure of himself, and give  
The genuine critic howl, 'a plagiarist,'  
As though those voices from the infinite,  
So vaguely understood, those glittering  
Fragments of great truths that drop at night  
From far-off starry depths of blue, or float  
On sunset tides from shores of white and gold  
Come not to all deep souls, from grand Sophocles  
Down to the Englishman who wears to-day  
So gracefully his Laureate crown." \*

"One can but think," replied Valoria,  
"How strange that in their grand march down the  
world

God's men and women walk so much alone."

"Yes," said her friend, "the priest walks in advance.  
We find in every good that men work out

\*Tennyson.

The individual is the power. The crowd  
 You note develops quick the brute in man.  
 A hot word here and there and a great mass  
 Of men will glow at furnace heat, men who  
 Have mothers and hear children's prayers, will tear  
 And bellow like wild beasts of prey. What we  
 Call culture never can drive from its old  
 Abode the brute in man. It chains him down,  
 Encircles him with walls, turns the strong lock,  
 And there he lies with nose on earth, but let  
 Some scent of blood, some sound from unforgotten  
 Jungle where his mates are free, some muttered echo  
 Of ungoverned thought, but penetrate his cage;  
 At once the body answers to the power  
 Within, the sense of brute power rises to its height,  
 And then—God help the man who thinks he holds  
 The key. No human power can tame the brute.  
 But once there walked the lanes of Nazareth  
 A Christ who dwelt among the simple folk,  
 And blessed their homes, talked with tired women,  
     dropping words  
 Of balm on their bruised lives, held a child's hand  
 While waiting for a mending net, or on  
 The sea slept in the boat until His friends  
 The fishermen had need of Him; and so  
 Healed and made sacred all their simple lives.  
 He walked alone; in that I often think  
 The world's reformers shadow the Great Type.  
 The rush and glitter of the world went on,  
 And Roman scorn and Jewish hate could find  
 Naught but the scourge, the crown of thorns, the  
     cross.  
 And yet His power has overthrown the kingdom set  
 Upon the seven imperial hills of Rome,  
 Scattered the Jewish tribes, and holds the keys  
 Of life and death to all the waiting world.

It is His power alone can drive the brute  
Forever from the heart of man.

And so

We give to men and women who after Him  
Save the world, the tempest of our scorn. We hack  
Their lives, forgetting that there never was  
A strong, pure, loving worker in the world  
Whose own heart did not hold unmeasured spaces  
For the sympathy of his kind. We let  
The hungry spaces echo to the call;  
Meanwhile with steadfast face and eyes,  
That see God's own grand meaning in the work  
He does, the world's reformers go their way alone;  
But when by aid of light which they have left  
The world has slowly studied up to them,  
We lay our books open at the page  
Where they left off, and clap our hands, and hang  
Fresh garlands over long-forgotten graves,  
And search the marble quarries of the world  
To find a background for their names."

Meanwhile

They talked so earnestly they had climbed height  
On height, now pausing to admire deep vales  
Below, and then to lift their eyes to where  
White mountain tops pierced the metallic blue.  
Wendal would sometimes take her hand to aid  
Her in ascent or steady her upon  
A height, and once he stood across a path  
She wished to climb, and said so quietly  
Between his other talk, "You will not go  
Here, Miss Mooer."

They found their dinner waiting  
In a cave, an old resort of Wendal's, but  
Unknown to Valoria until her guide  
Had ushered her within its cool, gray depths,  
To find a feast prepared, as Wendal said,

By mountain gods. When they had dined with gay  
Pretence of being, now Swiss peasants, then  
Pilgrims to some far-off sacred shrine, they  
Still pursued their wanderings up and down,  
And came at length upon a curious spot  
Where a bluff mountain ended suddenly  
Beside a lake, with just a footpath left  
Upon the shore. Valoria sprang forward  
And exclaimed,

“Now this is old Thermopylæ,  
And I am a Greek and will not let you pass.”  
Catching her merry mood, he stood grasping  
With martial dignity his alpine stock  
As though it were a sword, and said,

“Fair Greek,  
Although you stand alone as Greeks before  
The world, although before your gleaming blades  
Xerxes’ Immortals have been put to flight,  
And Persia learns the name of Marathon,  
Yet know that I will win the pass or die,  
And I will win, with weapons never yet  
Turned back, all the unconquered province that  
May lie beyond. For what to me is all  
That lies this side of thee, fair Greek?” he added in  
A softer tone with glowing eye. “And know  
That I too am a Greek, and I will win.”  
Then springing nimble-footed as a roe  
Upon the rock that leveled with her head,  
He stooped and with his strong arms pinioned both  
Of hers, and lifting her as though she were  
A child, he placed her on the rock, then took  
The pass, and called, “Surrender.”

“Surrender?”

Cried Valoria with well-affected scorn,  
“Surrender, to a Greek, and from a Greek!  
It is plain you have traveled far and have



Learned foreign words, for though I have journeyed  
to

The farthest stretch of our blue isles, that word  
I never heard. I never heard an infant  
Lisp it or an old man mutter it in  
His querulous talk, in all the land of Greece!  
The soft seductive airs that come up from  
The lawless sea to seek acquaintance with  
Our mountain winds, ne'er whisper that."

But still

He held her hands and kept his steady eyes  
Upon her face whose color came and went,  
And called again, "Surrender."

"But I am a Greek."

"And so am I."

While they had played Thermopylæ,  
The clouds had hastily gathered into force,  
And now came rushing down the mountain sides  
With dark and threatening front, and thunder burst  
With vivid lightning and large drops of rain.  
Valoria felt the shadow and looked up.  
The very hills, to her unused to Alpine  
Storms, seemed to be tumbling on their heads.  
Wendal had often met before such bursts  
Of Nature's passion in his Alpine tours,  
And watched with zest their play and fury bursts;  
But this frail girl whom he had led so far  
Upon the hills, how should he shelter her  
From Nature's rage? He caught her quickly from  
The rock, as a blue sheet of lightning veiled  
Her form and said,

"Valoria" (it was

The first time he had called her name), "I wish  
This jeweled day had held no harm for you."  
Then there arose a new strength in her heart;  
A strong faith in a human presence held

Her firm—the faith that means so much in women.  
She said with quiet trustfulness,

“Do as  
You would if you were out alone.”

“Not quite,”  
He answered, smiling, “for probably I would  
Not seek shelter, but that you must have; we  
Are two good English miles from the hotel,  
But there is a chalet not far down will give  
You a Swiss welcome.”

The way was short but rough,  
And the rain poured in floods; but only once  
She paused and hid her face when the blue lightning  
Flashed so near it veiled her eyes, and once he  
snatched

Her close within his arms as a tall tree  
In lightning blaze flew past them in its fiery course;  
And when he let her loose there was no color  
On his lip or cheek. They found a friendly shelter  
At the chalet, with a woman and two girls,  
Who brought Valoria their holiday  
Attire while they should dry her dripping robes,  
And unloosened the braids of her dark hair to  
Dry about her waist, and piled high the fire  
Upon the ample hearth. But still the rain  
Poured down, and the thick clouds hung o’er them  
like

A pall, but brought no gloom; the fire that blazed  
Upon the hearth gave not more warmth and light  
Than that which glowed within her heart. A soft  
Light rose within her eyes, and her sweet face  
Broke often into smiles without apparent cause,  
And a voice sounding through ear and heart spoke  
sweet

And low her name. She never knew before  
What new earth music might lie in a name.



She lay upon a couch to rest and seemed  
To feel his strong clasp as he held her when  
The pine tree fell so near; and heard again  
Two words, two quick impulsive words he uttered  
As he held her there, and as she thought of them  
A rosy smile that started from her lips  
Spread in glad ripples o'er her glowing face.  
She smiled, but could not sleep, although she had  
Been left alone and bid to sleep. Let those  
Seek sleep within whose heart the ashes are long  
dead

And undisturbed save by the cold white finger  
Of a buried past that will not rest but rises  
From its grave, and rakes among the ashes for  
Some hope of flame, and those who wander in  
The valleys always, who never tread the hills  
Or kiss the clouds. Bring sleep to those whose lives  
Are withered bud, and fruit, and flower, but seek  
Not now to still the song bird in thy heart,  
Valoria. Wait until coming years shall press  
So heavily on thy waking hours, thou shalt  
Thank God for the dumb oblivion of sleep.

But the rain ceased, the clouds rolled down, and  
soon

The clear ringing mountain air, leagued with new  
Sunshine, ruled again. They lingered yet beside  
The chalet fire to wait the lessening of  
The streams that ran in the fierce pride  
Of sudden power after the rain; and though  
Wendal had often sat quiet amid  
The general talk of the hotel, yet now  
He flashed keen sparkling words, that scattered  
gems

Of thought as clear and well defined as crystals  
Fresh from the bosom of a mine, across

The hearth stone of the chalet fire. The girl  
Sat listening with her earnest face half shaded  
By the ripples of loosened hair, leaned on  
Her hand—a hand that poise itself which way  
It would was certain of an attitude  
Of grace.

What is it whispers to the soul,  
When all serene she sits and gazes at  
The glowing face of some new joy that comes  
To meet her on her way with hand outstretched  
And sweet intelligence within its eyes,  
“It is the last”? Whatever sadly missioned  
Thing it is, it must have whispered then, for  
Valoria’s bright face seemed to enter  
Suddenly a shadow as they rose to go.  
She looked back lingeringly at the fire  
Dying upon the hearth and said, “I wish  
That one could always live upon the hills  
And eat in mountain caves and rest in chalets.”  
Then, blushing, added, “I mean that all our friends  
And all——” “I understand,” Wendal broke in  
So quietly that her blushes faded. “You wish  
That life were on the hills, breathing ever  
Their elastic air above all discords, all  
Low aims and petty motives, above all  
The doubtful essences that mix in cities  
Or where men are thickest, that make the mock  
Elixir of our lives; far above all  
Artificial wants to take at morning each  
Day’s gifts fresh from God’s hand and give them  
back  
To him to keep for us at night, while His  
Dear hand shall touch our eyelids with the seal  
Of sleep.”

“Do you not think,” she asked, “that we  
Are nearer God upon the hills?”

“Yes,” said  
He earnestly, “and nearer each other; thank  
Him for that.”

Below them, hidden here and there  
By jutting peaks, and shrined in loveliness,  
Was stretched the vale of Lauterbrunn, while hills  
On hills lifted their cold proud heads above  
Great clouds that hung upon their bosoms. Sudden  
Deep abysses gave a fierce grand welcome  
To the torrents’ fall. Within the old brown  
Chalet, perched upon the mountain’s sides, were  
Gathered all the elements that make life’s  
Joy or woe. Grandeur held tight the dainty  
Hand of beauty in his clasp, and often  
Touched her gentle forehead with a kiss.  
The twilight shades were gathering when they  
reached

The inn; the spell of silence was upon  
Their lips; their souls were bathing in that full  
Tide calm that words disturb but never may  
Express; but as they paused a moment on  
The balcony, Valoria said with her  
Good night, “I thank you, Mr. Wendal, for  
This day; I never shall forget it, it  
Has been so full of pleasure,” and added  
With a tinge of sadness in her voice, lifting  
Her eyes to a high peak where they had stood  
That day, that was now silvered by the moon,  
“This is our last day on the hills; you know  
We leave to-morrow.”

He took her ungloved hand,  
And, holding it between both his own, said,  
“God grant us many days upon the hills.”  
He added, as a moonbeam crossed her face,  
“Promise that you will rest at once when you  
Go in.” Then he held her hand a moment to

His lips and said, "Good night, Valoria."  
"Good night," she said again.

Wendal stood for  
A moment gazing at the spot that she  
Had quitted. Meanwhile a picture of Valoria  
Mooer as she had stood upon the balcony,  
Her mantle falling from her arm while white  
Moonbeams held the light against her sweetest  
Face and played among the shadows of her hair,  
Was photographed by love's strong light on heart  
And brain. Let him mark it well! for in long  
Coming years, in deserts and in crowds, he  
Will strive with wearily closed lids to bring  
It back again.

Then he went in to join  
A club friend, Howeth, just up a week from Paris,  
Who met him with, "So, Wendal, you are en-  
slaved?"

"Enslaved, enslaved! No, that is not the word;  
I have stepped where Dante stood with her he loved  
Upon the highest arc within the circle of  
The zodiac, and I could stand with her  
Safe gathered in my arms, and see all earth  
Removed without a sigh, sure that where she  
Was, heaven was not far off."

"The Lady Mooer  
Is in the circle too, I fancy, by  
The deepening color on her cheek and quick  
Averted eye whene'er I spoke of you.  
I tried the effect of your name on her more  
Than once. Jove! it was charming, just coming as  
I have, from faces where all feeling, like a child  
Unruly, is locked upstairs or in dark  
Basement, and not once allowed to come within  
The drawing room or glance out the front windows  
Till the guests are gone. But I tell you, sir,

You have something there to curb and tame. I saw  
Her flash defiance from her eyes and lips,  
The other day, at some old piece of humbug  
Long crusted by the sacred touch of time,  
Before a patient group of worshippers  
Of conservatisms. Her father sat among  
Them too."

"The scorn of petty plot or trick  
I cannot admire too much in her whole nature;  
Its perfect truthfulness shines like a diamond  
Hilt that holds a gleaming blade, and if she needs  
A steady rein, you know I always wanted  
Things to tame. When I was a boy I have  
Often worked for weeks and never once gave up  
To make a timid wild hare come and eat  
From out my hand; and as I older grew,  
A horse that would throw any other rider  
Was my pride. Excessive tameness in most  
Any thing is wearisome to me. I know  
It is much prized in women; but I have  
Not cared for your tame, neat cream-candy type  
Of girls; they make most excellent vinegar  
After a slight exposure to the sun;  
You do not catch one of them looking back  
With clear, intelligent, responsive eyes  
Like some grand creature, when she feels the rein.  
They neither can command or mould life as  
Full toned women who understand the whole  
Run of the gamut, and know all the stops—  
When to draw them out and when to close. They  
Understand the beauty of deep bass or  
Finest semibreve, and by their perfect  
Knowledge draw the stops and teach the keys to  
Make most self-forgetful harmony out  
Of life's roughest passages, while the sweet  
Girl, who thrums forever on her c and e



And knows no more; when c and e are out  
Of tune, must sit quite dumb and helpless.  
Here is a woman strong in character,  
Harmonious in thought, amenable  
To reason and to right, and if at times  
She wants a firm hand on the silken rein,  
What grander realm could the very king of men  
Aspire to make his own?"

"He who does it  
Surely is a king," replied his friend.

"He  
Must understand," continued Wendal, "well  
That grand completeness which God meant when  
He

Thought out a woman; and so surround the weaker,  
Sweeter life with stronger love that holds control,  
Not for mere brute will's sake, but that the broader  
Life like our home garden walls might shield from  
Harm our lily and our rose of life."

"I wish you joy, dear friend, and if your rare  
Blush rose should prove a difficult one to  
Fasten on a wall, its wondrous fragrance  
Will repay the care."

"Some choice instruments,  
You know, exposed to any winds give out  
No discord. But let us go; there is a view  
Below I want to show you, where the river  
Gathers up her silver robes and makes a plunge  
To unknown depths below."

## SONG

Blow, summer winds from Orient Isles!  
Through summer days prolong  
Your incense breathing choruses  
In fullest tide of song.

Bloom, summer flowers, in summer fields!  
Empty each perfumed cup  
Upon the bosom of the winds,  
Let glad hearts drink it up.

Gleam, Eastern skies, with rosy light!  
Flash out your golden beams  
Across the zenith to where dips  
The Western Isle of dreams.

Shine bright upon us, stars of night,  
From azure fields afar!  
Build up to heaven a shining track,  
And set the gates ajar.



## BOOK SECOND

### AT HOME

The Wye danced brighter in the morning sun,  
And sang its songs in lower notes at night,  
All nature seemed aglow with newer life,  
And offered sweeter incense at the gates  
That spread afar their gold and crimson bars,  
Glad to receive the waning light, while night  
Let fall the noiseless draperies of her robe  
On wood and vale and flower. Valoria's  
Face seemed lighted by the rosy reflex  
Of a smile within that wandered to her eyes  
And led them far away among green hills;  
And often, too, her feet would climb some height,  
And she would sit and dream and dream of gladness  
That the sight of hills brought to her heart. O  
dream

Of life! drenched in dawn's rosy light, must you  
Fade to gray daylight at the serpent's touch?  
O golden cup of life's elixir! where  
Is gathered all the perfume and the essence  
Of this life of ours, must you fall and break  
And mingle with the clay, staining in your fall,  
Maybe, some garment that can not be worn  
Again, but laid away with broken pieces  
Of the golden cup.

Days wore to weeks. A look  
Hinting surprise grew up within the hazel  
Depths of her sweet eyes, for linked with Wendal's  
Farewell words came the request that he might  
write.

"And after that," he had said, "I hope to see  
You in your home in Wales." But yet no tidings  
came;

Her heart had learned to flash its tumult to  
Her changing cheek, like some shy bird that shows  
Its nest by flying, when the postman knocked.  
Weeks spread themselves to months; the months told  
round

A year; and yet no word—no sign. She was  
So young, her heart unused to the sharp touch  
Of pain. She sat alone with fixed sad eyes,  
The life gone out from all the life around;  
But ever living over that white day  
Upon the Hills. Alas! for us who hold  
Such possibilities of joy shut close  
Within or barred without, that we should starve  
For years upon the memory of a day!

Then there came a letter from a cousin  
Of her mother's house—a pleasant running  
Comment upon men and things in the great  
London world—who said, after much careless  
Gossip, that he had long been promising  
Himself a trip to Wales; he longed to make  
Acquaintance with his relatives, the more  
As he had heard Valoria had quite  
Surpassed in loveliness the most rare promise  
Of her nursery days. He would be there at once  
But that he was detained to help fulfil  
A promise made a friend that he should be  
His second at his marriage. This friend,  
One Leo Wendal, he, of all men, would  
Not disoblige. They had been closest friends  
In college and in club. Their names, in fact,  
Rang into one; there was, indeed, a vague  
Chance that the marriage might not occur;  
Wendal had more than once been on the eve  
Of such a step but for some cause, he could  
Not say just what, there had been a rupture

Always when one most expected orange  
Blossoms and white gloves. He loved his friend  
so much,

And it was so very foreign from his nature  
To suspect, that he still held faith in him, though  
Of course he was the last to justify  
A thing like broken faith—especially  
With a woman. Such things were done he knew;  
Indeed faith could be broken without a word,  
As it could be pledged, but never would he  
Think so badly of his friend. No! he would  
Scorn the very thought; but had his cousin  
Mooer in intercourse with men, ever observed  
That often glaring weaknesses (he would  
Call them by no name more harsh) were grafted  
In with genius? But all this was doubtless  
Quite uninteresting to his cousin Mooer.  
He had been led to mentioning his friend  
Because through him his longed for visit might  
Meet some delay; but until they should meet  
Would his dear friends in Wales think of him as  
Their loving relative,

Hugh Waterford.

He followed soon upon his letter—a keen  
Eyed gentleman, supple of limb, and free  
Of tongue, with soft bland words rounded in periods  
Grateful to the ear, and full of graceful  
Gallantries, with swift attention to all  
Ladies' wants in bringing a forgotten fan  
Or dropped bouquet, or chasing worsted balls  
In carpet flight. The gaping, haunted cavern  
Of Valoria's life, with so much lost  
Where all had been, received the sounds of life  
This man brought gratefully. Its dreary ghosts  
Sometimes would send a chill of horror through  
Her veins. Her life had been so full of blessing,

Rounding in such graceful harmony with God's  
world;

And she had climbed with such glad feet upon  
The Hills, and there had met the presence whose  
Strong life had thrilled across her own, drawing  
From it such music as the gods were glad to hear.  
Her king had crowned her on the heights; they had  
Descended to the plains, and then—and then—  
Drowning men catch at straws, and so a heart,  
Groping in utter darkness round and round  
The fatal spot where fate's black hand has snatched  
Its joy away, may often catch some bit  
Of colored glass and ask itself in sheer  
Despair, "Can I close my eyes and make it seem  
The diamond that I lost?"

When this cousin heard  
From Mr. Mooer that they had met his friend  
Upon the Hills, he met it with surprise  
And said, "Indeed! how strange he never told  
Me. I shall challenge him when I return  
For such neglect of my fair cousin here.  
Wendal, too! so much a connoisseur in  
Ladies' charms."

"Pray," said Valoria, "let him go unscathed—  
We have no wish to cross his path again;  
And as for you, I bind you to the peace  
About his name; I beg you will not let  
Us hear it once again."

Then her white fingers  
Flashed along the sounding keys in clashing  
Music of swift sounds. Her voice, too, gave its full  
Rich tones to battle songs and ringing choruses,  
Grand old marches, songs of victory, not  
Low winding notes that by their silver links  
Join some far thought upon the edge of life  
As she had used to draw from minor keys

When one had listened to her on the Hills.  
When but a week had passed it grew to seem  
Hugh Waterford pervaded all things. He  
Knew all the boundaries of Mooer's lands and  
guessed

With shrewdness at their valuation, made  
Himself at home among the tenants, dropped  
Small silver bits to children, chatted long  
And laughed most affably with all, and when  
He went away there seemed a void. Before  
He went he asked his cousins Mooer for their  
Consent to win Valoria's hand; should he  
Gain such consent, and should he win, his life  
Would be only too short to testify  
His obligation and make known his love.  
The mother quickly gave consent. "A man  
They knew so well, one of her own, the heir  
Of sound estates, no chances of deception here."  
The father's eyes grew troubled and he spoke  
Not for a time. At length he answered him,  
"I draw no rein upon my daughter's heart,  
But know that she may safely follow where  
It leads."

When to Valoria he made  
His suit for love, she answered, with her eyes  
Fixed on some distant hills, "I like you, cousin,  
But like is very far from love. Love dwells  
Upon the Hills among its gods, while like  
Walks down beside the valley streams."

He said,

"I am content to be a valley stream  
If only you will walk beside. It is said  
That heights are cold, and I know well that there  
The archers strike with surest aim. There are  
Many wounded ones upon the Hills. Is my  
Sweet cousin strong enough to face the flying



Arrows and December blasts? Let the vale shield  
Her with its arms and heart."

She answered, while  
The distance in her eyes seemed to have reached  
Some unseen height, "Let me walk up and down  
The valleys for a time and see if I  
May draw love down from its high place to dwell  
With me. But mind, I give you yet no lover's  
right."

---

A month in London, then again to Wales.  
Meanwhile he wrote and mentioned that his friend,  
Whose name was contraband by her whose wish  
To him should after this be law, had missed  
Him sadly and had tendered him his most  
Sincere congratulations, when he had  
Confided to his trust the one most cherished  
Secret of his heart and hope in life. He had  
Just left for Abyssinia, having a taste  
For travel in outlandish lands, and said  
"He hoped he should be gone for years."

Hugh Waterford again took up his home,  
And spread his presence in the daily life  
Of her whose love he sought to win, while Mooer  
Kept close to his books. Valoria walked  
And rode with him, and often by his side  
Would float in her light skiff and dip an oar  
In the bright waters. Sometimes she paused upon  
Her oar to think of how the light fell on  
Geneva's lake, and how her king looked as  
His steady oar sent bursting pearls along  
The deep blue wave. Then a look, such as a bird  
That sees its hope alone in flight might cast  
From gilded cage, grew in her eyes while Waterford  
Would chatter his small talk, from which all life

Seemed to have dropped, ceaselessly on. He failed  
To bring the freshness that he brought before,  
But went his paces nimbly over, told  
The same old stories, made the same remarks  
In the same places, showed a son's interest  
In Mooer's lands and bank accounts. It was hard  
For her to hear all this and then recall  
The infinite variety of that other mind,  
That like a many octaved key-board under  
The fingers of a skilled organist,  
Gave quick responses to the farthest touch.  
Yet to Valoria he brought all that  
His nature knew of love; she was his shrine,  
He worshipped her while she sat patiently  
And took the offerings that he brought, and praised  
Their beauty with far wandering eyes. But her  
Soul starved; she had no shrine for worship; she  
Looked down to him. Had he been strong even  
With roughness, she had learned to lift her eyes;  
But this smooth, neat, round atom of a man—  
How could she worship any good in him?  
She longed for love to lift her to such heights  
That all ignoble things should be forgot,  
To draw her to its heart as the great sun  
Draws dew. She thought of Wendal always on  
The Hills, but here there were no heights to climb,  
Only long flats of barren sand. Meanwhile  
Her father watched her with a saddened eye;  
His heart misgave him that she could not do  
The things she strove with such strong will to do.  
It hurt him like a new edge in his heart  
To think that the bright iris braid that spanned  
Her young brow on the Hills should be toned down  
To sombre tints, and that she, too, must wear  
The neutral colors on her breast to counterfeit  
The blood red sign of love.



What curse is on us in this lower sphere?  
Is it the old one yet? or is a new  
One bred for each new joy that lifts its head  
Above the rim of earth, and strives to lay  
It on a human breast? O God! we lift  
Up helpless hands to Thee and ask Thee why?  
While those who question not but take all things  
For granted as they come, shake pious heads  
At us and tell us to put down our hands:  
Thou knowest there are times that we need aid  
Of holy ones to hold back cursings.  
One day Mooer sat alone, lost in a dream  
Of bitter-sweets. Valoria came to him  
And, kneeling on the hassock at his feet,  
Put her clasped hands upon his knees. He saw  
At once that the caged bird was gone from out  
Her eyes; the old, clear light reigned once again  
Within their hazel depths.

With a quick glance  
Of her old playfulness, she said, "Your child  
Has come to claim congratulations; she  
This day has overthrown a house builded  
On sand, cast down an image and unloosed  
A claim that bound her, every link of which  
Was made of brass and eating like a canker  
At her heart."

Then added with more earnestness,  
"My father, you have known how eagerly  
I tried to build my house with uncut stones  
And urged by pride to fill the gaping void  
Of life with the wan semblance of a real love,  
And how I tried, hoping I might deceive  
Myself, to call each stranded hope I laid  
For my foundation stones, a thing of new  
Sprung life and beauty. God forgive me that  
I builded such a thing, meaning to call

It by a sacred name. Then my white image  
That I made the center of my system,  
I went and kneeled before it day by day  
In worship form, crowning it with my fairest,  
Choicest flowers, and called it Love. Its whiteness  
Chilled me, and I painted it with Love's red  
Hue, but my coloring was bad, it would  
Not take the shade. Then when I felt the chain  
Of half pledged love binding my shuddering soul  
I knew I was a fool, or worse, so to  
Insult my God by acting such a lie.  
Was I so weak that I must stoop for strength  
To such a weak thing as Hugh Waterford?  
And is my ear so lost to sense of sound  
That I must call his little jangling on  
The keys the music of my life?"

"And yet,  
He loves you, daughter."

"Yes, as he renders love,  
But wounds soon heal on such a soul."

"Are you  
Sure you do him no injustice in your  
Quick judgment of his heights and depths?"

"Yes, I  
Have measured well his shallow soul—it were  
Most easily done. I might have done it standing  
On the brink without the trouble of once  
Stepping in, and saved the wetting of my  
Shoes' soles. As to heights, he does not even  
Comprehend an altitude. I feel that I  
Have let unworthy guests come in and fill  
The holy places of my soul. Father,  
You know what touched me on the Hill; it drew  
Me up to blessed heights until I kissed  
The clouds and almost laid my hand in God's,  
And felt the farthest off infinity

Of space grow warm with loving. I cannot  
But think God gave me that, and meant it for  
My own; and if some evil thing has come  
Between my heart and its blessed light, I will  
Accept God's love in meaning it for me.  
And, despite my cousin's words, I hold him pure;  
I feel his soul is now, and always has  
Been, and will be forever, true to truth.  
I will be brave enough to live without  
Love, but I will not light a rush and call  
It noonday sun. I blame women who will stoop  
To say, 'I cannot understand, I love.'  
But I must quite despise a man who writes  
His name along with such an infant's creed:  
And he—he knows no more of all that makes  
My highest joy or deepest pain than night  
Of noon. It were not well to spoil God's other  
Gifts by setting in their midst an alien;  
God gives us love through His great perfectness  
In all things. Through all beauty we may read  
His broad name Love. Then if one source is dimmed  
It were a sin to close my eyes and say  
There is no Love? Life has many blessings;  
Let us be sure we miss none in counting.  
I gave our cousin audience in the arbor house  
And let him understand beyond a doubt  
His claim on me was void in life as well  
As law. He leaves to-morrow: then we will  
Go back—go back," she added, clasping her  
White hands around his neck, "And if there should  
Be something lost, my truest friend, why, we  
Will consecrate the void and make it pure  
From all that may defile or make a lie."

Joy seems a prisoner that loves to find  
Its way back to the home it lost so long,

So long ago among the sons of men,  
And evermore it sits within its cage  
Whose iron door is held fast closed against  
The world's starved heart held by the same strong  
hand

That forged the curse. How eagerly it springs,  
When not too closely watched, to touch a human  
Heart, and light up weary faces, call back  
Wandering eyes or touch with its elixir  
Fainting lips! God knows humanity needs  
Its warm touch. Joy seemed to have unloosed its  
Prison door, and dropped upon Valoria's life  
A distant smile.

She sat again before her easel, long  
Forgot, and there grew beneath the skilful  
Touches of her artist hand the picture  
Of a chalet fire; each bit of homely  
Furniture, each trophy of the chase, that  
Held a place within the Switzer's hut, came  
Out upon her canvas. Then a girl sat  
By the chalet fire, in Swiss costume. You  
Could not see her face, it was so shaded by  
The upraised white hand; but her attitude,  
Even to the ripples of loosened hair,  
Was one of wrapt attention. The crowning  
Touches of her art seemed to have been held  
To give strength, dignity and grace to her  
Companion, who sat throned in perfect type  
Of manhood, and who seemed so really  
Talking, that one felt at once to listen.

Deep grew the sweet depths of her hazel eyes,  
And bright the rose tint on her soft white cheek,  
Shed from Art's altar fires that blazed up high  
And broad, its own white heat made crimson by

The touches of the rosy fingered god  
Who thrust his subtile wand among the flames  
So frequently that the fair artist's face  
Was often all aglow.

                    The picture finished,  
An untouched bit of canvas took its place,  
And upon that grew near and distant Alps,  
The topmost silver-crested by the moon;  
And where the shadows fell there seemed to lie  
A measureless abyss of shade. The moon's  
Light glinted shower-like on a balcony  
Where two figures stood, the girl in shadow,  
But the man—the same who sat by the bright  
Chalet fire—seemed to absorb the light, he stood  
So clear with shadow all around him.  
It might be that she felt herself again  
Upon the Hills, beside the chalet fire,  
Drinking in music from that sweet old tune  
That never will grow old, but falls as sweet  
And new on human ears to-day as when  
In the first garden, long ago, God's voice  
Dropped soft and low to crown all other gifts,  
The silver notes among the sunset airs  
Of Paradise, which Adam quickly found  
And set to sweet, low, earth words, thereby drawing  
Lovely Eve from the glad wonder of new  
Life, listening with parted, pearl-tipped lips  
And cheeks like the shell's heart that lies within  
The bosom of the passionate sea, rose  
Glowing from its center, with new earth light  
Breaking through the starry splendor of her  
Heavenly eyes; for she seemed to bring back  
To her life the clear-eyed joyousness one  
Finds in places near to love and God.



## SONG

Where the soft shadows fall,  
Where the wind's voices call  
Softly and low,

Mother earth cover me,  
Daisies grow over me,  
Bury me low.

Far from the sound of strife,  
From the rude voice of life,  
Bury me deep.

Where the soft summer rain  
Soothes all my weary pain,  
There let me sleep.

Wild are earth's hopes and vain;  
Even Love touches pain;  
Bury me low.

Mother earth cover me,  
Daisies grow over me,  
Bury me low.

### BOOK THIRD

Will evil triumph or will good prevail?  
And what avails the struggle with the wrong?  
Is human life floating up from the shore  
Of the great silence that enwrapped the world's  
First consciousness (though long before God's voice  
Had echoed through the Dawn, leaving  
His words to crystallize in suns and stars)—  
Is this life, so floating from the Infinite,  
A thing to take with joy? Or is it but  
A mode of punishment for spirits who  
Have sinned in some dark long-ago? From what  
Shore over what waste of waters do we come,  
Lost children, far from home, who cannot tell  
Aught of their fatherland, but only know  
(By the sharp stirring of deep hidden chords  
At sight of perfectness of beauty meeting  
Eye or ear) that home was beautiful, but  
So far away! and that the faintest tread  
Of angel feet echoing down through the stars  
Brings to the soul a sense of pain and loss,  
Till "loss" becomes the watchword of the race!  
God help from his security of joy  
Those souls who cannot see the gain beyond  
The loss, the love beyond the pain; and hasten  
On the golden time when they shall see  
The gain of loss.

### LONDON

Moor, for the sake of her he loved so well,  
His own young life blooming beneath his eye  
With beauty daily growing more intense,  
And he feared, frailer, took up life again  
In London, hoping the change and glitter



Of the world's gay heart might effectually  
Efface all traces of the shadow from  
Her heart and life. How wise our parents grow!  
Did he forget a little box within  
A corner of a house in Wales, that held  
A girl's glove and a broken ring, with some  
Small fragment of a rose's heart?  
Did he forget the song, that, even yet  
In some June days when the low summer winds  
Were borne across the dry sands of dead years,  
Would come to him, that sad, sweet, nameless song,  
Bringing the memory of the mad, lost dream of  
youth?

### LETTER TO LEO WENDAL

"Safe in the Happy Valley are you, friend  
Of mine, and watching daily round the walls  
If maybe you can find an opening through  
Your bliss whereby you may escape? Well, I  
Wish you all success, and hope you will strike  
A London trail. Since you have gone, I've lived  
Quite hermit-like, eschewed society,  
And snubbed the world. A month ago I heard  
A murmurous flutter of approving sounds  
And stepped out to see. A note from Lady  
Huntley (who is my cousin and a favorite,  
You know) baited with, 'I have got the sweetest,  
Newest, loveliest star to shine within  
My rooms to-night, so do not fail to come——'  
Brought me out, as I then thought "for one night  
Only." Who should be presented, lifting  
Her fair face like the queen of flowers, above  
A shimmering sea of pearl-like draperies,  
But Valoria Mooer—the same and yet  
So changed I scarce can tell you how. Her beauty

Flashes in the London lights with a power  
And brilliancy we never dreamed of when  
We all kept holiday among the Hills.  
I say, we, when I should say, I. How do  
I know how far your dream went? Her eyes, those  
Clear-orbed hazel, wear a look sometimes that  
Strikes me like the cry of some lone bird lost  
In the night and storm. I find it only  
Comes in moments when the sentinel is  
Off his guard. I saw it come one day as she  
Turned from a picture rest that held a view  
Of Lauterbrunnen, but the rare brave mouth  
Did never once betray or swerve from its  
Sweet steadfastness; and that live color that I  
Used to call up with the mention of one  
Name, now keeps its place as calmly as some  
Painted dowager's. Wendal, to you I write  
Without a mask. You gave me once your manly  
Confidence, and I know that for you she bore  
In her white hand the olive branch that told  
Of the subsiding waters in your strong  
Unrestful soul, vexing itself while others  
Sat and smoked, with dropping line and plummet  
In unanswering depths; and if I ever saw  
A woman whom love touched newly like a glad  
Surprise, I saw her in Valoria Mooer.  
We are bought and sold in this world's mart,  
And sell our royal birthright for a mess  
Of pottage that turns out the merest stew,  
That when one finds a real diamond  
Among the paste, he is as glad as was  
The one of old who found the Pearl of Price.  
The question haunts me, What has come between  
The light of your two souls, that should now be  
Shedding on each other their soft splendor?  
I shall confess my thoughts turn quite direct

To that man Waterford, who aped you all  
Through Oxford, and then wormed himself into  
Your confidence by claiming cousinship  
With your friends the Mooers. You can testify  
I never liked him, and felt always that  
There was the puppy in him, though he would  
Bristle up and bark in vicious big-dog style.  
This cousinship seems doubtful, for he does not  
Come within her circle here, but lingers round  
The outer edge with hungry eyes that make  
Me wish the good old privilege known as  
"Doubling up" to our brave sires had not gone out  
Among gentlemen. Mooer treats him not too  
Cordially. I have watched them closely, thinking  
Of the words you said that night when you disturbed  
My peace by saying that you left London  
For the Happy Valley by to-morrow's train,  
And when I spoke her name you said so coolly,  
'O, our friend, Miss Mooer, she marries Water-  
ford—'

And then, 'good-night,' so quickly that I thought  
I dreamed. Now take a friend's advice and hasten  
Home. I can but think you have been victims  
Of some wrong. There are quite an host of suitors  
At her shrine, but not one of them can bring  
The wordless music to her face that I  
Have seen there when a certain friend of mine  
Would step or speak suddenly at her side.  
Come back, O friend! and try again your power—  
Flash out the music from her lovely face.  
I warn you if you do not I will try  
The scales myself. It is now said that "Howeth's  
The favored man." I think I am not quite  
Mistaken in the thought that when she hears  
My voice she listens to another that  
She first heard mine with. It is unflattering,

But truth compels me to admit she does  
Look past my eyes, although I am not quite  
So fragile as to be mistaken for a ghost.  
And yet I have failed to tempt her by my  
Most artful talk to ask a question that  
Might touch your name; although I saw her bend  
An hour above a book and never turn  
A page one night when two of our old club  
Discussed you not far off.

You know our friend  
Sawstones, the logical, with his three-storied head  
Well stored with facts, who wrote three books to  
prove

That "A was A" in refutation of  
The heresies of Bick when he affirmed  
That from a given point "A was not A  
Alone but also B." Would you believe  
That he has trundled all his facts and fossils  
To her shrine and vowed that if she would but  
Come to him that he would henceforth set her,  
At least even with his ologies within  
The highest chamber of his head and heart!  
He would keep his vow, too, piously as  
Men keep the wish of their dead wives, that they  
Should marry and not mourn for them. You know  
We never thought him conscious of another sex  
Before; it is quite a new phase in which  
To study up the human, if it were  
Not too sacred to make notes, to see what  
Tremor of bewilderment the touches  
Of her robe will bring upon the settled  
Statement of his face.

Now, Wendal, I have  
Given you warning fair. There are other  
Champions entering the lists, so should  
You care to lift her glove and break a lance,

Then show your knightly spurs upon the field  
At once. The world will gather in three months  
To the great heart of England, there to see  
Its sights and show its shows. Valoria  
Stays until the coming wave rebounds. Her  
Father lingers more, I fancy, for her  
Sake than for his own.

Hoping to meet you soon,  
Howeth."

## SYDENHAM

The great world gathered for its interchange  
Of sight and sound of sixty-one. It was  
A thing to mark a life: standing within  
The nave to hear the grand orchestra pour  
A nation's wail for the true prince who had  
Laid at her hushed feet the early broken  
"White flower of a blameless life." Meanwhile his  
Work lived after him and rose a fitting  
Monument, grand, high, and broad, and, like his life,  
Transparent, not hung round with cumbrous curtains  
Ready to be drawn at given signal  
Of a finger on the lip, but lifting  
Up its many crystals to the sun, flashed  
Back for every ray a thousand  
Patterns of the king of day. God be thanked  
Whenever on the world falls the sweet incense  
Of a good man's life!

The wave of song had died  
Away among the courts while men stood silent  
With uncovered heads, and women wept at thought  
Of the lone Lady on the throne whose star  
Of life had set so soon. Valoria's



Thoughts were with the dead ; twice her father spoke  
Her name before she found the fitting words  
To answer greetings from a gentleman,  
Who said,

“I have been most anxious we should meet,  
Miss Mooer. I wished to say how much I am  
Your debtor for two pictures from your hand—  
Gems, I assure you, and not I alone—  
Your mother has not written, then? Oh! she  
Said perhaps she would reserve it for a great  
Surprise.”

Then he told how a month ago,  
Being in Wales, he called upon his old  
Friend Mooer, was grieved to find that he was  
absent,

But felt repaid at sight of two rare works  
Of art—Miss Mooer’s last paintings—which  
Her mother showed. As he was on the list  
Of judges for that department of the world’s  
Great Fair, he urged his claims at once, which Mrs.  
Mooer

Had with great kindness listened to, and loaned  
Them for the time. He had himself attended  
To their hanging in most favourable lights:  
If Mr. Mooer and his fair friend would come  
Now, he would be most happy to conduct  
Them where they hung.

Valoria’s heart stood still.  
That those two pictures painted as they were  
From colors drawn, like the fine spider’s web,  
From her own being, should hang in mid-day blaze  
Before the idle gaze of half a world!  
Her lips refused to speak. Her father begged  
Excuse, another time, his daughter was  
Not well, had been deeply moved by the grand  
Tribute to our buried Prince; and bore her clinging



Like a dead weight to his arm, away from sight  
And sound. Alone within her room, the storm  
Broke over her; the far off sea-line showed  
Its white-caps to the lowering sky, while waves,  
Starting from ripples in the distant years,  
Broke in broad columns at her shuddering feet.  
God help us in our helpless days of storm!  
When by the quick electric stab within  
The heart we know from just what wreck the  
wave-worn

Fragment tossed upon the shore has come. This  
love!

Alone at midnight she had dug its grave  
And pressed the mould upon it with her foot  
Of pride; had raised no monument, planted  
No rose, not even placed a little cross  
To say "Resurgam," when she passed that way.  
But to-day she knew it lived, had glided out  
Its grave e'er the sun glinted on the mould,  
And followed her with noiseless footsteps through  
The aching years, stealing the rose's bloom,  
The sweet heart music from the winds and waves,  
And all the light of beauty from her life.  
Now, pacing up and down her room, she pressed  
Her white hands on her eyes as though to hide  
The thought that her most sacred heart of hearts  
Hung in broad light for all the world to read.  
After the storm was spent she gathered some  
Degree of comfort from the thought that there  
Was only one, and he, she hoped, was safe  
In Abyssinia, whose eye, seeing  
Her work, could read her heart; so after all  
The world would only see the painted mount  
And torrents' fall, with a traveler standing  
By a peasant girl.

After three dreary days

She took her place again among the crowd,  
More frail but lifting lily-wise her queenly  
Beauty white and rare. One day when half the  
world

Had wearied of its sights and shows and had  
Turned homeward, Valoria, wandering through  
The thinning ranks alone, had paused to gaze  
Upon a painting near her own. She felt  
A sudden tremor through her frame, such as  
We sometimes feel when the electric wave  
From some other life reaches across the circle  
Of our own, and a soft girlish voice cried,

"Leo,

There is a picture here so like you that  
You must have sat for it in some of your  
Aerial flights."

Then a gay girlish form  
Half followed and half led along a man  
In whom in spite of bronzed and bearded face  
She recognized her guide among the Hills.  
Pointing to the picture of A Chalet Fire,  
The maiden said, "Cousin, behold your duplicate."  
His eyes followed half carelessly the painting  
Of her hand; then the life rushed up above  
The bronze and beard and broke in hurried ripples  
Over cheek and brow.

"Who painted that? Howeth! Howeth!"  
Catching his friend who came along just then  
And pointing with his steady gaze, "There is  
But one in all the world who could have painted  
that."

"Ah, very like; 'tis a rare piece of art;  
I have heard it much admired, but I wish  
To show your cousin here something quite rare  
In statuary, so with your leave I take  
Her now. Do me a favor, will you? See

That lady moving toward the door? Follow  
Her quick and give her this from me."

Then, Howeth

Thrust a letter in his hand and, bowing,  
Led the lady bird away. By the time  
Valoria reached the door she had grown calm;  
So when the step she knew so well paused at  
Her side, and they two stood again gazing,  
Each on the other's face, across the edges  
Of the yawning years, she was the first to speak  
The fitting words which friends use when they  
meet,

Having been only friends. Wendal stood like  
A courtier who has been so long in duty  
On the field that when he found himself again  
In the bright presence of his queen forgot  
His courtliness. But there are souls who spring  
So quickly to each other's level, leaping  
All boundaries of time, estrangement, pride  
And almost hate, let them but meet, they rush,  
Electrify and mingle, quick as light  
And air, besides, one glance full in her hazel  
Eyes which looked but simple truth, yet neither  
Asked nor gave, wrought its old charm in spite of  
doubts

And aching fears; and when she smiled adieu,  
Holding the letter in the hand he had  
Just touched, his heart was keeping holiday  
Upon the Heaven-kissed Hills.

"Now, Wendal, stay me with flagons of your  
Choicest wine, and comfort me with odors  
Of the East, while I recount my last achievement  
On the legal turf," said Howeth, entering his  
friend's

Room when the night had come. "Thank you, two  
chairs

Will do. A week ago, coming from court  
One day with all my legal energies  
On tip-toe, mouth and eyes agape, I chanced  
On Waterford. Thinking of some things that  
I wished to know, I linked my arm in his,  
And led him to my rooms. Never turned opening  
Bloom to meet the sun as his confiding  
Heart opened to me. A glass or two of my  
Best Burgundy loosed every hinge, and flung  
Wide open all the charmed recesses, where  
It is supposed his inner nature hides.  
It was hard work to hold the glass and smile  
When one so longed to aim it at his head,  
But I restrained my rage, led him along  
By certain names, until within the narrow  
Chamber of his soul I pounced on a vile truth.  
Know then: that when three years ago you put  
A letter in his care on plea of cousinship,  
He never sent it, kept it till he might  
With his own eyes be sure if all were true  
He heard of his fair cousin's loveliness—  
He also gave attention to her father's  
Interest at the banks."

"What! never sent it? Then  
She never knew, Valoria! Let me  
Go, I'll hound him to her feet, force him  
To swear his perfidy before her eyes.  
Oh, my heart! to think of all those aching years  
Breathing their separating breath between  
Us since that last look in her eyes upon  
The Hills,—sweet eyes, that looked for me, looked  
all

Along the coming days for me, who never  
Came or made a sign. I did distrust that man,  
And when the silence grew so long, I went  
To Wales myself, drew near enough to see

Her sitting in a garden seat, and see  
Him bending over her arranging roses  
In her hair. Then I believed the story that  
He wrote me telling of their love, also  
Believed the message came from her which he  
Passed on, that she could only think of me  
As a friend. Howeth, why has the devil's  
Hand such power to trump our surest cards? But  
I must go to her now."

"Listen a moment  
Longer—she knows all now; you placed within  
Her hand to-day the letter that you wrote  
Three years ago; and that I wrung from our  
Friend Waterford. After I gained so much  
By wine, I filled his timid soul with fears.  
It was a work of time, but still not very  
Difficult in his muddled state, insisted  
Also on a written statement from him  
Of his own perfidy also sent to her.  
So now, my boy, go in and win; as for  
Old brimstone Jack, we'll trump him with our  
Queen."

---

Fair acres, varying wood and vale and lea,  
And winding silver links of low-voiced streams,  
Lay round a mansion where a lady moved  
With graceful step through brightly furnished rooms,  
Her white hand touching now and then a vase  
Of flowers, or statuette or drooping shade  
Of window drapery to more harmony.  
Now she looks from the windows or from off  
The balcony, lifts her eyes as though to catch  
Some coming one, and then she reads again  
A letter she has held all day, which says:  
"To-day I bring her, mother, bring my wife  
To-day, whom you will love for her sake as



For mine. How strange that she should bear your  
name,  
Valoria; your buried name, you called  
It once. I hope the grave wherein it rests  
Is not so dark that it will cast a shade  
Upon your daughter's name; it is so sweet  
To me. To-night, dear mother, she shall put  
Her hands in yours to be your child, her heart  
In yours to fill the place a daughter has  
Not filled before.

In hope and love, yours,  
Leo."

This lady, let us look at her and watch  
Her as she moves amid the halls and rooms.  
Those who had seen her cross the threshold as  
A bride said that the blood had never seemed  
To touch her face, and that for years before  
Her early widowhood, she had ever been  
A woman with great depths of patient eyes,  
Who never told the story of her wedding  
Day to girls. Now from the balcony she lifts  
Her eyes, which look as though great fires had  
burned

Themselves to ashes there, to the bright woods  
Where Nature's funeral fires were burning on  
The hills and dying in the vales; then let  
Them fall upon the waters gliding past  
Her feet, whispering so softly to the leaf  
Whose flushed cheek lay upon its breast, whispering  
Maybe such comfort to the dying leaf  
As we to our beloved, that there will be  
A resurrection, and that it may be  
In the blessed time after the snow pall shall  
Be gathered up, the selfsame leaf may hang  
Again over the same clear stream, where it



Will be sure to find its image still held in  
Its heart. Did the lone lady think of that  
Glad coming time, or did her thoughts stay with  
The dying leaf burning its heart away?  
As a sad spirit speaks to its familiar, thus  
The lady speaks:—

“We sit beside a loom;  
Fate fills the shuttle while we weave and weave;  
We have no choice of shade, and often wearying  
Of the darkening web, we cry for ‘rose and gold.’  
Fate’s lips are dumb, her eyes cast down, she does  
Not heed our earnest cry, till some dark day,  
When we have ceased to cry for rose and gold,  
She drops by us a shuttle filled with each.  
We seize it eagerly, and weave it through,  
But still no form, no comeliness! Our eyes  
May not look on the right side of the web.  
We hold the empty shuttle in our hands  
But search in vain for bloom of rose or leaf  
Of gold. It must be in bright bloom upon  
The other side; for only here and there  
A golden thread that shows no form is thrown  
Upon the wrong side of this web of life,  
To hold for some bright spanning on the right.  
Oh, God! if the lone weaver could but see  
The right side of the web, his weary face  
Might then not grow so pale, nor all the light  
Fade out of his sad eyes, nor his hands grow  
Thin, forget their cunning as he drops his  
Shuttle and falls beneath the loom, crying,  
Just as men say, ‘he dies,’ ‘I see the right  
Side of the web.’ Oh, weavers! it is hard  
To sit alone all day and weave and weave,  
To die and leave the web to be unrolled  
By other hands; when one will cut out here  
A breadth, just where we lost our rose, to soften

Window light, and another choose a cloth  
Of emerald and gold to spread upon  
A couch, while all applaud the taste of him  
Who furnishes, and marvel at the rare  
Wrought beauty of design."

A sound of wheels,  
Tramping below of feet upon the stairs,  
And a clear, ringing, manly voice calling  
Her "mother," brought the light upon her face,  
The love within her eyes; and when Wendal  
Said, "Mother, I bring my wife to you to set  
Beside me in your heart," the lady took  
Her daughter in her arms, then laid her hands  
Upon her glowing cheeks, and kissed her eyes  
And lips. The life rushed up and struggled with  
The death upon her face, conquered, then took  
Its old place on her cheek again while her  
Voice said,—

"Oh, my Evangel! come to make  
Me sure God's love is not forgetting, though  
He seems to live so far away, and that  
The right side of the web of life unrolled  
Is perfect in design and wonderful  
In all completeness of broad purposes.  
Valoria! the name I buried with  
My girlish dreams. Valoria! my rose  
Of life sprung from its grave to bloom and bud  
About our house. Valoria! the past  
Gives back its dead."

When the moon was high that night and everything  
Was silent in and out the house, Valoria  
Entered the lady's room and placed within  
Her hands a small and curious ivory box,  
A bit of Venice carved upon its lid,

And said with her good night,  
“When my father
Bade his child farewell, he said, ‘Valoria,  
If ever one should look into your eyes  
In search of mine, and kiss their lids down when  
She finds them, give her this.’”

## ALUMNÆ POEM

*(Read at the organization of the Alumnae Association  
of Acadia Seminary, Wolfville, N. S.,  
June 1st, 1892.)*

Ring out, June bells, upon the breeze,  
Floating the colors that we love,  
In loyal greetings from above  
The glory of the summer trees!

Bells of Acadia, strong and clear  
Ring out your country's meed of praise  
To those who, through the widening days,  
Weave the white web of knowledge here!

The varied threads the ages span,  
On busy spindles of the brain,  
Are readjusted, till again  
The loom shows forth the better plan.

Oh, busy spindles of the past!  
Oh, whirring wheels forever still!  
Dead spinners! who once sent the thrill  
Through laden shuttles flying fast

Along your warp threads in the looms,  
Long crumbled in forgotten dust;  
The hinges of your doors are rust  
That closed upon your spinning rooms!

Yet many a golden thread ye span,  
And many a new design is wrought  
On patterns which the weavers sought  
To fashion for the use of man.

Updrifting from the changing sea  
The past into the present brings  
The echoes of the song that rings  
O'er the wide earth by low and lea,

Of the rare maid Evangeline,  
Whose simple truth shall ever stand  
The loadstar of Acadia's land,—  
Though ripening ages roll between

The far-off day, when, looking back  
From crowded deck of alien ship  
With breaking heart and pallid lip,  
The roof-trees' blaze illumed her track.

A happier lot is ours to-day.  
Peace spreads her banner o'er the land;  
May queen and country ever stand  
The sacred names for which we pray.

Greetings! from those who, looking back,  
Feel from afar the summer thrills,  
Spent glories on the morning hills,  
Grown distant in their lengthened track.

Greetings of heart and hand to this  
June garden of Canadian girls!  
If loving thought might gather pearls  
Our rhymes would ne'er a jewel miss.

---

We hold among the precious things  
Outgrowing from the heaven above,  
There's nothing worthier of love  
Or care from us than girlhood brings,

With its sweet faith in coming good,  
Its fearless eye and ready hand,  
Its locks agleam with golden sand.  
God bless Canadian maidenhood!

When the wide margins of the soul  
Are taking form and color on,  
When men are heroes true and strong,  
And right knows never wrong's control;

When purple summits, glory-crowned!  
Await the pressure of their feet,  
When all things true and gracious meet  
Upon the hills that stretch around.

For white ranks forming year by year  
The spaces in your country wait,  
Your truth shall help to make her great  
And fill her homes with happy cheer.

Be sure no higher mission calls,  
Although the laurel and the bays  
Are held aloft in open ways,  
Than ministry within home walls,—

To touch with bright artistic grace  
The common lot and daily way,  
To be the eye and ear and stay,  
Of those who falter in the race.

For highest culture never should  
Disturb from its appointed sphere,  
From the creation, showing clear  
God's gracious plan of womanhood,—



The womanhood that trims the lamp  
Whose opal light shall ever gleam,  
Athwart the memory in dream;  
Of home, on ocean or in camp,—

The womanhood that up and down  
The wards where wounded soldiers lay  
Walked while by her small lamp's clear ray  
The bruised hands moved to touch her  
gown.

The womanhood that held the hands  
Of the Christ-child upon her lip,—  
The womanhood that saw the drip  
Of His life blood upon the sands.

The air is filled with boding sounds;  
Right struggles in the coming stress,  
While Reason in an alien dress  
Gives the pale Christ again his wounds.

Truth is of God; it claimeth not  
To stand on any earthly base;  
Wars rage, ambition shows its face  
In places by the dollar bought.

Yet myriad stars cry out to thee,  
The spreading sea this message rings.  
From the high hills of God there swings  
Truth's pendulum untouched and free!

The right will triumph; let us then  
Work on the side yet sure to win,  
And waste no hours with soft-lipped sin,  
However sweet the tongue or pen;

Environed by whatever wrong,  
Hold fast the soul's integrity,  
The inner sanctuary's key,  
Though loud the clamor of the throng.

Now let us each clasp woman's hands  
Around Acadia's maiden life,  
That glows to-day with promise, rife  
In future good to many lands.

With earnestness as woman should  
Before the heat hath dried the dew,  
Ring out the frivolous and untrue!  
Ring in the nobler womanhood!

## ENGLAND LISTENS

What are the sounds that I hear,  
Gathering strength as they come,  
Earnest and deep as a prayer,  
Strong as a cheer for home?

The voices of children afar  
Calling from over the sea,  
Be still, O babble of war,  
Till I hear what they say unto me.

It is coming by steam and wheel,  
It is coming by wave and wind,  
It is flashing under the keel,  
And this is the message it brings:

## VOICES OF THE COLONIES

Oh, mighty mother, take our sons  
To stand with thine around the throne.  
The pulses of thy Kingdom beat  
Strong in our hearts as in thine own.

Thy cause is ours, our leader thou,  
To follow, asking no retreat.  
Shall we stand idle, while the stress  
Of battle presses at thy feet?

Far from the Mayflower Land,  
Far from the heather,  
Thistle and Maple Leaf  
Stand they together.

Right in the teeth of hell  
Shoulder to shoulder,  
Red Rose and Shamrock press!  
Which is the bolder?

Now the palm shows its plume,  
By the Australian,  
Watch while he closes in,  
This is no alien.

These are strong sons who stand  
Guarding the portal  
Of the old mother land.  
Crown them immortal.

Love by their graves shall weep  
Forgetting never.  
Light on their graves shall fall  
Ever and ever.

## SONG

Life gives us better than it takes away,  
In brighter hope and broader, fuller day.

There is no past, but all things move and blend  
In sure fulfilment of a promised end.

We leave the misty capes and vales we trod  
For the glad sunshine on the Hills of God.

To slow, grand measure up the aisle of years  
Move truths enfranchised from long bonds and  
tears.

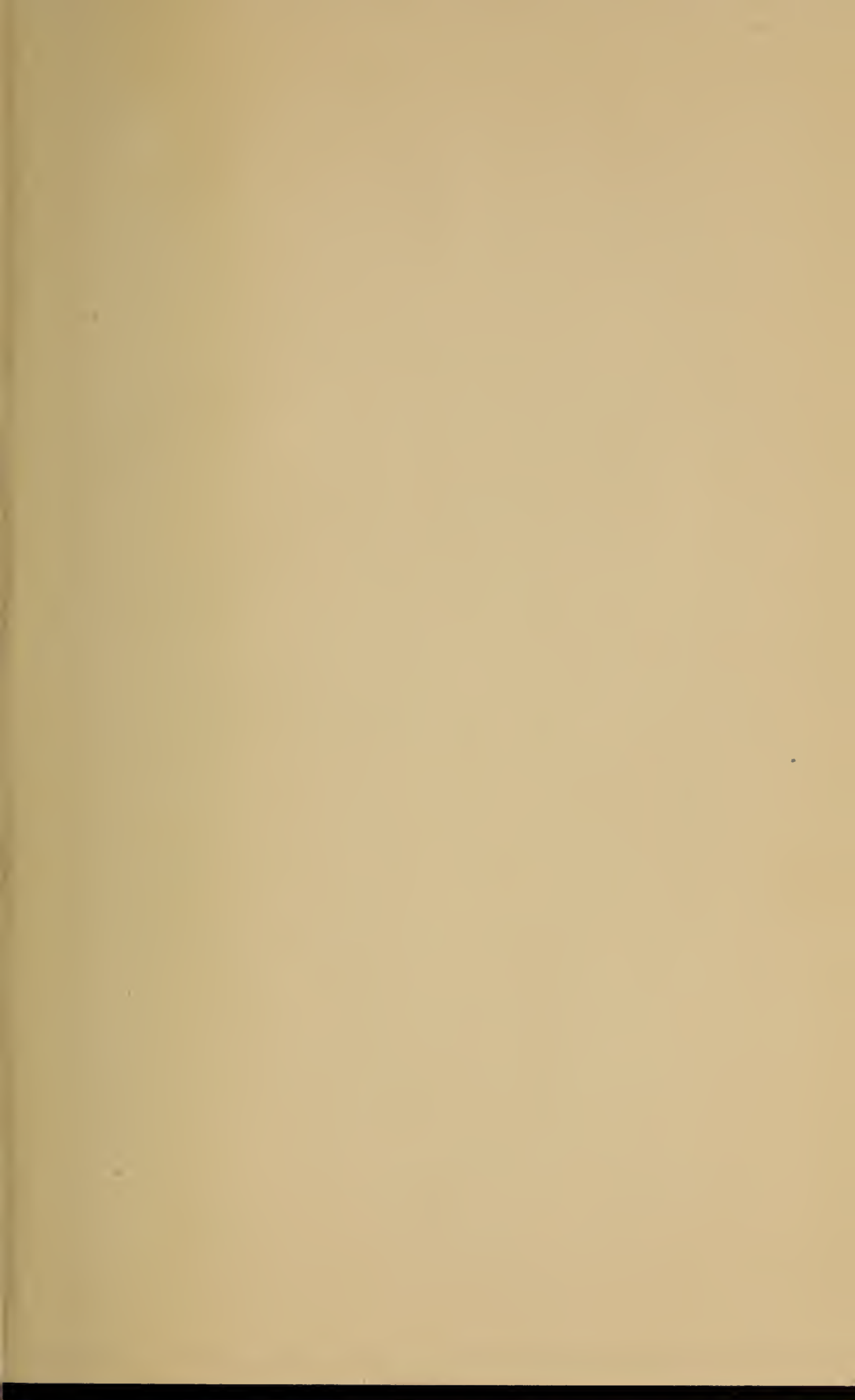
Hands that groped darkly for the truth of things  
Hold the clear signet of the King of Kings.

Broad waves, that tossed in fierce white passion  
heat,  
Fall into psalm and kiss the resting feet.













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